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# THE TRUTH SEEKER.

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DEVOTED TO

SCIENCE, MORALS, FREE THOUGHT, FREE ENQUIRY AND THE DIFFUSION OF LIBERAL SENTIMENTS.

*"Come now and let us reason together;" Let us hear all sides; Let us divest ourselves of prejudice and the effects of early education; Let us "prove all things and hold fast to that which is good." Complete.*

PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY THE LIBERAL ASSOCIATION OF PARIS, ILL.

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## INTRODUCTORY.

The publication of this little monthly is entered into that those holding liberal views upon religious and theological subjects, and those in favor of getting out of the deep ruts of bigotry, superstition and error, may have an additional organ through which to speak, and through the columns of which their opinions and sentiments may be made known to all who care to hear them.

A discussion recently sprung up in this town between some members of the clergy and our own friends, and when we wished to reply through our city papers to articles designed to silence us, we found it difficult to gain admittance to their columns, and have in some cases been flatly refused the opportunity of defending ourselves when attacked. The pulpit is against us, the press is against us, and unless we have a "mouth-piece" of our own, we can hardly see how we are to have an equal chance with our opponents. Common fairness should certainly admit our being heard as well as those who differ from us. It seems to us also there is ample room for a monthly visitant of this kind. There are hundreds of thousands—yes several millions in our fair country, who are more or less skeptical in their religious views, and we have but few organs through which to speak and be heard, and we see no reason why our modest effort should not be liberally sustained. We are willing to let our "light shine" and to do what in us lies to diffuse the sentiments which we believe tend to progress, advancement and the improvement of our fellow-beings.

We are not unaware we are taking a bold stand—one that but a few centuries ago would have cost us our lives, and one that even now may produce alienation of friends, and the censure of the bigoted and illiberal portions of the community. It is no small undertaking to oppose in a positive manner the religious superstitions of centuries, and to hold up in the clear sunlight of to-day the false theories and errors handed down to us from the dark ages of the past. The church is rich and powerful, with thousands of priests all over the land, under munificent pay, to maintain her claims and advance her interests, as well as to stifle and suppress every voice that may be raised to point out her false assumptions and every utterance that may be made in opposition to the chains she binds upon the too passive and easily duped people.

We are not vain enough to think we will be able to bring to bear greater ability in this labor than has heretofore been exercised by others, nor do we expect striking or immediate results from our efforts; but feeling no disinclination to aid with our feeble hands to help on the wheel of progress which we are happy to know is steadily and firmly moving through the world, we cheerfully add our little strength to the work, and will be happy to do what we can towards diffusing light and liberal sentiments.

Our columns will be open to all who feel disposed to favor us with communications and correspondence, whether they are with us or opposed to us; and the same are respectfully solicited. If members of the clergy or any of our Christian friends

wish to reply to any doctrines we may advocate or in support of such as they may believe to be true, our little paper shall be at their service so far as room will permit. We mean in all things to be fair as well as free.

The Truth Seeker, at all events, is in for a year's campaign, and we hope the intercourse with our readers may continue many years; and we ask the friends of truth, light and mental liberty to give us their aid, both by contributing to our columns and in helping us to get up a generous list of subscribers.

It must be apparent to every person that at the low price at which we furnish this paper that our profits are extremely small and that its publication is not entered into for the sole purpose of making money. We claim to be governed by higher motives and to be actuated by nobler impulses. At the low price at which we furnish it we place it within the reach of every individual. There is scarcely a person in the whole country who can not spare fifty cents for a liberal, fearless, outspoken paper for a whole year; and, while we trust every liberal-minded person under whose notice this sheet may fall will decide to subscribe for it at once, we hope also many members and friends of the church will also see fit to take it and see what we have to say. Let all be free and liberal enough to hear both sides, and not base their belief by hearing one side only.

Some 12,000 copies of this number will be issued and distributed over the country. We will be very glad if our circulation can soon double that number, and we can see no good reason why it should not. We trust every person who sees a copy of our paper and wishes to take it for a year will write to us at once, enclosing the small price we ask for it, that our lists may be made up in time and necessary arrangements made. We trust our friends in all parts of the country will take an interest in bringing The Truth Seeker to the notice of every liberal-minded person in their immediate locality and to all they think will be disposed to take it. If they have friends or acquaintances in other localities to whom they wish the paper sent, just subscribe for a copy for each and send us the name and locality and it shall be promptly forwarded. The amount is very small, and, in view of the amount of original and reading matter we furnish, we think there is not a cheaper periodical in America.

Our price is 50 cents per year; seven copies to one address for \$3, or twelve copies to one address for \$5, with two extra copies to every ten additional names—payable always in advance. Sums of two dollars or over should be sent in Postoffice order or by registered letter.

All communications to be addressed to THE TRUTH SEEKER, Paris, Ills.

To those who do not feel inclined to do more, and can give us the names of persons who they think will be likely to subscribe for our sheet, we will thank them to send their addresses to us that we may forward a copy for inspection.

Again we say to our friends, let The Truth Seeker be sustained—let it be successful in disseminating light and truth and in dispelling the fogs of superstition, bigotry and error.

## OUR PLATFORM.

We extend the right hand of fellowship to liberal minds of all grades and classes. We ask them not to adopt our special views and opinions—to see with our eyes or to understand with our reason. We are not "hide-bound," nor do we ask others to "measure their wheat in our half bushel." We embrace, as in one brotherhood, Liberals, Free Religionists, Rationalists, Spiritualists, Universalists, Unitarians, Friends, Infidels, Free Thinkers, and in short all who dare to think and judge for themselves. Let us compare our views; let us canvass each others' opinions and reasons, and see which has the better way. We have no creed or dogmas to ask others to subscribe to, but are in favor of independent thought, free enquiry, free speech, and everything that tends to break the chains of mental bondage, ignorance and superstition. We hope the majority of those to whom we send this number of our paper will not only approve of our objects and aims but send us their own names, and also the names of as many others as possible. Fifty cents is a small matter to any individual, but enough of them combined will enable us to keep alive and in a flourishing condition this fearless little sheet.

While the various sects and churches have some hundreds of weekly and monthly papers to represent their many creeds and doctrines, the liberal portions of the community have but few organs, and it seems to us that one so low in price as this should be liberally sustained. Send us in then your little remittances, and we will endeavor to give you the full worth of your money.

## VIRTUE AND MORALITY.

How excellent is the practice of virtue and how commendable in every sense of the word is a life of morality. They are the sources, and the only sources we may say, whence are derived peace of mind, happiness and contentment. Their worth and excellence can hardly be too fervently impressed upon the minds of the rising generation as well as all ages and classes. If they were always viewed in the right light it would hardly be necessary to urge upon the young or upon any age the superiority of a good life over a bad one; for the practice of virtue brings its own reward, and its effects are immediate and the compensation in this life.

There is a vast difference of opinion as to what constitutes virtue and what is morality. Our Christian friends claim it consists in believing the dogmas of Christianity—all that is contained in the Bible, and that every word of it is direct from God himself—in joining a church; aiding in the support of the priesthood; in believing that God sent his only and well-beloved Son into the world to suffer and die that his wrath towards the helpless beings of his creation might be appeased and that a fraction of them might escape the terrible torments of a never ending hell.

These and a kindred set of equally absurd doctrines are believed in a part, at least, to constitute virtue, and the practice of it is enjoined more for the effects it will have in the life beyond the grave; in saving our souls from the hell aforesaid than

## WHAT CHRISTIANS ARE REQUIRED TO BELIEVE.

That God existed millions upon millions of ages, but without occupation until about six thousand years ago, when He made this world and the countless other worlds that revolve in space; that the earth was created before the sun; that there was light, morning and evening, before the sun was made; that it required five days for the Lord to make this small world, together with the animals and plants upon it, but that one day was sufficient in which to make the sun, moon and innumerable stars, which are themselves suns and worlds, many of them millions of times larger than this globe; that man was made of the dust, and woman of one of his ribs; that God placed the pair, with the infirmities He had created them with, in the Garden of Eden, in the center of which stood an apple tree of His own planting, the fruit of which He knew would inevitably doom man and his posterity forever to interminable and unutterable woe; that the serpent, which was also a creation of God, and pronounced good, held conversation with Eve and seduced her to eat of the apples and to give of the same to Adam, by which act they and the world after them were hopelessly ruined; that God regretted that He had made man, and to destroy him from the face of the earth, sent a great flood of water to cover the whole world to the tops of the highest mountains, some five miles in depth, (though we are not told where this immense body of water could possibly come from, nor where it could go to when assuaged); that Noah and his wife, with his three sons and their wives, together with two each of every unclean animal and fowl and seven each of every clean animal and fowl of every variety and species upon the face of the earth, were gathered together and voluntarily entered the ark, of moderate dimensions, and where, though of all possible contrariety of tastes, habits and dispositions, and feeding upon all possible kinds of food, they, with sustenance sufficient to keep them, lived together for the space of one year in the ark, with a single window or door, the same kept closed and the ark coated with pitch within and without; that notwithstanding all this the inhabitants of the earth soon became as wicked as before; that God made a contract with Abraham that his offspring should be His chosen people forever, in preference to any other portions of the human race, though the same were equally as much the children of His own creation as the offspring of Abraham; that He appointed Moses to be a ruler and law-giver over them, commanding the sacrificing to Himself for His own pleasure and gratification, immense numbers of bullocks, rams, he-goats, &c.; that He commanded many nations to be utterly exterminated, including women and children; that God alternately loved and abhorred His chosen people, and blessed and cursed them by turns, sometimes giving them the property that belonged to others, and sometimes slaying at one time 50,000 or 70,000 of His children for some trivial offense an individual had committed; that He was changeable, fickle, vindictive, revengeful, malicious and cruel; that He took pleasure in wars, battles and bloodshed, and frequently ordered His people on to wholesale slaughter and destruction; that on one of these occasions, Joshua, a common mortal like ourselves, stopped the sun and moon in their course and caused that day to be several hours longer than any other day before it or since, and for the purpose that a greater number of human beings might be slaughtered, and that a still greater amount of human blood might be spilled; that the witch of Endor raised Samuel from the dead and enabled Saul to converse with him; that David was the man after God's own heart, though one of the greatest brigands, despoilers and robbers the world has ever known; that Solomon was the wisest man that ever lived, though one of the greatest libertines of which we have any account, having 700 wives and 300 concubines; that Sampson had sufficient muscular strength

to overthrow a temple and tear open the jaws of a lion, and that this great strength lay entirely in his hair; that according to Elijah's prediction no rain or dew fell upon the earth for three years and six months; that he sojourned with a widow woman and increased her stores of oil and meal, and that he restored her son to life after death had absolutely taken place, and that finally he was taken up bodily into heaven by a whirlwind in a chariot of fire, and never saw death, though it is utterly impossible for a human being to exist for a minute in the higher regions even could they be transported thither; that Elisha caused an ax of iron which had sunk to the bottom of the river to float and swim upon the surface; that he sent two she bears out of the woods and destroyed forty-two children because they had said to him "go up thou bald-head;" that Jonah was swallowed by a large fish, in the belly of which he remained three days when he was thrown up upon dry land as good as ever; that Daniel was cast into a den of lions and that they did not touch him or do him the slightest harm; that the three jews, Shadrach, Meschack and Abednego, were bound and thrown into a fiery furnace made seven times hotter than usual, and not a hair of their heads was injured nor a thread of their garments burned, though the strong men who bound them and cast them into the furnace were utterly destroyed by the heat; that King Nebuchadnezzar in the space of one hour was driven from his throne and kingdom, from the habitations of men into the field with beasts and cattle, where he fed upon grass like an ox; this continuing for "seven times." Exactly how long this was we do not know, but it was until his hair had become like eagles' feathers and his nails like birds' claws, after which his kingdom was again restored to him.

That Jesus Christ was the son of God, and equal in age and power to God himself, and born of a mortal woman but without a natural father; that He performed marvelous works and miracles, setting aside the laws of nature which had been established for the government of the universe; that to appease Divine justice and anger He was cruelly put to death on the cross by God's own chosen people; that at the time of the crucifixion the earth was rent asunder, the graves opened and the dead in them restored to life, that they walked out of their graves and mingled with their former associates; that after three days the Son of God arose from the dead and for forty days remained with His disciples, when He was taken bodily up into heaven.

They are required to believe that God having made man with all the appetites, passions and frailties he possesses, and for acting just as his nature impels him is doomed to the flames of an endless and ever-burning hell, and though He has sent His own beloved and innocent son into the world to be ignominiously put to death to thereby appease His anger and satisfy His justice, still but a small portion of the human family can be saved, but are doomed by their Creator and Father to suffer for countless ages and forever ceaseless and most excruciating torments. They must believe that one is three and three is one, and both the same; that the Father and Son are of the same age and equal in every respect; that bread and wine are really, by the action of priests, converted into the body and blood of Christ; that the bodies of thousands of millions of people who have lived upon the earth will at the last day be raised, though the same gases and particles of matter must have entered into the bodies of thousands of different persons.

All these and many more equally absurd dogmas and stories must be implicitly believed or we must be damned.

Now seriously, is it not most wonderful how a sensible, intelligent, rational being can subscribe to all these and other similar absurdities? And having gone so far would it seem very singular should they go a little farther and swallow as true the stories of the Arabian Nights, the tales of Maunchausen, and Gulliver's Travels?

This, however, is the basis of christianity, and this we are required to believe or suffer the penalty of endless punishment. But we beg to be excused. It is impossible for us to give our assent to doctrines so absurd. We believe God is merciful, just, loving and kind to *all* His creatures, and we are willing to trust our destinies with Him rather than to give our adhesion and credence to the absurdities above named.

## INFIDELS VERSUS CHRISTIANS.

There is nothing more common than for infidels and liberalists to be held up by the clergy and members of the church as the vilest of the vile, and to be denounced in unmeasured terms as bad and dangerous men. This, to say the least, is extremely unjust. It is quite possible some infidels may have been unworthy men, but so far as our observation has extended, we have found them to be good moral citizens, well and peaceably disposed, honest in their dealings, upright in their intercourse with their fellow men, and as freely disposed to open their purse to the call of the needy as any other class of men.

Many of the first minds and best men of our country were infidels. Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, George Washington (so claimed by Jefferson.) John Adams Ethan Allen, Thomas Paine, and many others of the cotemporaries of their times, belonged to this class. In our own times we will mention the name of the great and good Lincoln, whose heart was singularly ingenuous and free from guile—the emancipator of 4,000,000 slaves and the author of the noble sentiment, "charity for all and malice towards none;" he was an infidel. In the same category may be ranked Humbolt, Combe, Darwin, Huxley, Buckle, Froude, Tyndall, Grote, Weisse, Leche, Spencer, Stuart Mill, Bismarck, Liebig, Bradlaugh, Garrison, Phillips, Emerson, Kneeland, Parker, Sumner, Conway, and a host of other brilliant minds in the walks of science, statesmanship, letters and theology. These men are distinguished not only for their science and education, but for the morality and purity of their lives. To say the least they will compare favorably with the clergy of the day, who seem to be quite as full of infirmities and infallibilities as any class of men we have. A friend of ours has kept an account of the members of the clergy who, within the last twenty years, have been arraigned before the courts of the country and their own churches for crimes and misdemeanors, and that number has already reached over fifteen hundred. And more than half their peccadillos are never brought to the light, but are "hushed up" for the good of the cause and to save disgrace to the church.

It was recently admitted by a divine in this vicinity that the clergy was as well represented in our penitentiaries and State's prisons, in proportion to their numbers as any class of the community, while it is seldom that an infidel is found there. It is reported that in the State Prison at Auburn, New York, there are twenty members of the clergy confined for the crimes they committed. Are these indeed not a pretty class of men to cry out against the immorality of infidels?

Our little sheet will doubtless be attacked by them and be denounced in strong language; but we will say to the gentlemen if we are in error and our cause is as weak as they represent, they have no occasion to fear what we can do. If they are right and we are wrong they certainly ought to easily be able to show it, and we offer them the use of our columns where they can speak in a fair and honorable way. We would ask them not to "stab us in the back" when our attention is called in another direction, nor to attack us from the pulpit in our absence or where we would not be permitted to reply were we present. There is an honorable warfare and a dishonorable one; we prefer the former.

## LIBERAL PERIODICALS.

It is a source of gratification to progressive minds that in our land and time so many able and outspoken organs of free thought are sustained by the people. They are doing an incalculable amount of good in breaking the crust of superstition and error with which the world has been so long enveloped. They are giving the masses subjects to think upon and are opening their eyes to the follies and errors of old creeds. They are leading the popular mind out of the mists and fogs of ignorance on to the elevated ground of truth, where the sun of science, reason and utility is no longer obscured.

Among the journals of this class we will mention *The Boston Investigator*, a candid, fearless and consistent advocate of what it conceives to be vital truth, and intimately connected with the interests of humanity and the affairs of the present life. It is forty-two years of age, and has nobly withstood the shafts of malice, bigotry and sectarian intolerance for more than a generation. Long may it live and flourish. See advertisement on eighth page.

*The Index* is an able organ of cultured Free Thought, devoted to free and rational religion. It gives utterance to the boldest and most matured thought of the age upon all religious questions, and applies it directly to the social and political amelioration of society. See advertisement on last page.

*The Golden Age*—Published by Theodore Tilton, and is conducted with distinguished ability in the interest of liberal thought. It is unique and original in appearance; abounds in brief and spicy paragraphs, and is greatly quoted by the entire press of the country.

Prominent among the liberal and progressive organs of the day are the publications of our Spiritualistic friends. They occupy a field peculiarly their own, and advocate a philosophy which is beautiful in character and which we ardently hope is true. At the same time they are zealous workers in the cause of humanity, Free Thought and advanced liberal views.

*The Banner of Light*, the oldest paper of the kind in the country, and an able exponent of the spiritual philosophy of the nineteenth century, well deserves the liberal patronage it receives. See advertisement.

*The Religio-Philosophical Journal*, published by S. S. Jones, of Chicago, is an able and enterprising sheet, gotten up in excellent style, conducted with marked ability, and highly prized by its numerous readers, containing as it does much very readable matter upon the subject of spiritualism and advanced liberal thought. It is doing a great amount of good, and should be read by every liberal-minded person. See advertisement.

*Our Age*, published by Lois Waisbrooker, of Battle Creek, Michigan, a comparatively new candidate for popular favor, is a weekly journal, devoted to the interests of Spiritualism in the broad sense of that term, and does not admit there are side issues. It is conducted with ability and independence, and is worthy of a liberal support. See advertisement.

*Brittain's Quarterly* must not be omitted. It is an excellent work, full of truth, reason and sound philosophy. It has but to be read to be appreciated.

Each of these journals has marked out a course peculiarly its own, though, so far as the cause of truth and humanity is concerned, working in unison and harmony. They are all free, independent and outspoken, and greatly in advance of the organs of a superannuated Theology. They are a band of generous and noble workers in the cause of truth and right, and it is with pride we join our humble efforts with these laudable undertakings. There is no need of jealousy between us, there is room enough for all. The labor to be performed is immense; the field is truly ample; "the harvest is plenteous but the laborers are few." Though we may not agree upon all points, we occupy the same common ground of free thought and mental liberty.

Here let us cordially meet and amicably co-operate in the good cause. Let us say or do nothing to repel each other, but accord to each the rights we claim for ourselves.

It is due from the radical, liberal, independent minds of the country to support the above publications. The numbers in the United States belonging to this class is great—amounting at least to ten millions of people, and each one of the number should be a constant reader of two or more of the above journals. We are pleased to know they are liberally patronized, and we wish to see their influence still more widely extended, and while we are glad to see our co-laborers flourish and increase, we are selfish enough to feel still a little more anxious about ourselves. Our pretensions are moderate, and our price so insignificant that we hope to have a long subscription list. We trust, however, no person will drop either of the above papers in consequence of subscribing for *THE TRUTH SEEKER*. We are in sense a rival to either, but propose merely to be an auxiliary in the cause of human progress. Give us a helping hand.

THIS number of *THE TRUTH SEEKER* will be sent for examination to many who are not subscribers, but who we earnestly hope will become so. The carrying to a successful result the publication of a paper of this kind is an enterprise of no small magnitude, and requires the aid of friends in all parts of the country. This aid can be rendered in various ways:

1. By subscribing promptly to *THE TRUTH SEEKER*.

2. By subscribing for additional copies to be sent to friends and acquaintances in other localities. As we furnish twelve copies for a year for \$5, it will take that moderate sum only to ensure the circulation of a "round dozen" of this fearless exponent of liberalism. May we not hope that many friends of Free Thought will be induced to do this?

3. By calling the attention of every liberal-minded person within convenient reach to these pages and influencing them to add their names to our subscription list.

4. By sending us the names and address of all persons of their acquaintance, and in whatever localities, who will be likely to appreciate a periodical of this character, that we may send them a specimen number for examination.

We respectfully request our friends everywhere to extend us their aid in the manner and order indicated.

WE will be glad to have an active agent in every city and town in the country—one who will make a point of calling the attention of all liberal-minded persons in the immediate vicinity to *THE TRUTH SEEKER*, with a view to their subscribing for the same. To those who will act in this capacity and will write to us, giving us suitable references, we will send them a certificate of agency and allow them a commission of twenty per cent. upon the regular subscription price. This will be dividing the profits as closely as possible, allowing us but a narrow margin of profit. May we not hope that in every city, town and community at least one friend of humanity will be willing to use a little extra effort in the cause of truth.

WE WOULD suggest to our subscribers the propriety of preserving the numbers of *THE TRUTH SEEKER* and at the close of the volume to have them bound. If not convenient to send to other parties for this purpose, we will undertake to bind them for our subscribers at a moderate price. The volume will be of convenient size, and we trust valuable and convenient for reference as well as general perusal.

WE wished to get this number out by the first of the month but unavoidable delays prevented. We will endeavor usually to be on time.

## DEMANDS OF LIBERALISM.

The following nine propositions issued by Francis E. Abbot, of *The Index*, we endorse most cordially, and they are approved by liberal minds all over the country:

1. We demand that churches and other ecclesiastical property shall no longer be exempt from taxation.

2. We demand that the employment of chaplains in congress, in state legislatures, in the army and navy, and in prisons, asylums, and all other institutions supported by public money, shall be discontinued.

3. We demand that all public appropriations for sectarian, educational and charitable institutions shall cease.

4. We demand that all religious services now sustained by the government be abolished; and especially that the use of the Bible in public schools, whether ostensibly as a text-book or avowedly as a book of religious worship, shall be prohibited.

5. We demand the appointment, by the President of the United States or by the governors of the various states, of all religious festivals or fasts shall wholly cease.

6. We demand that the judicial oath in the courts and all other departments of the government shall be abolished, and that simple affirmation, under the pains and penalties of perjury, shall be established in its stead.

7. We demand that all laws directly or indirectly enforcing the observance of Sunday as the Sabbath shall be repealed.

8. We demand that all laws looking to the enforcement of "Christian" morality shall be abrogated and that all laws shall be conformed to the requirements of natural morality, equal rights and impartial liberty.

9. We demand that not only in the constitution of the United States and of the several states, but also in the practical administration of the same, no privilege or advantage shall be conceded to Christianity or any other special religion; that our entire political system shall be founded and administered on a purely secular basis, and whatever changes shall prove necessary to this end shall be consistently, unflinchingly and promptly made.

## DISCUSSION UPON THE EFFICACY OF PRAYER, &amp;c.

It has been requested that we give place to the following discussion between two of our friends and the same number of our Paris clergymen, which was published in one of our city papers—*The Gazette*—within the last four months. Our space will not admit but a portion of it in this number, and it will be continued in two following numbers:

## To the Clergy.

REVEREND SIRS: We infer, from your numerous Biblical quotations and statements made at the Methodist church last Sunday evening, that your conclusions are: *God hears and answers prayer*; and that if he does not, then the Bible is false, your preaching is vain, and your temples of worship are worse than useless.

Now, we would suggest that you would prove the efficacy of prayer by accepting the challenge of that philosopher, Prof. Tyndall, who, with many others, desires to test the efficacy of prayer by having a hospital, or single ward of a hospital, which shall receive the special prayers of the Christian public for not less than three years, and if it shall be found at the end of that time that the rates of mortality are less, and the average numbers of recoveries are greater than in hospitals or wards for which no special intercession has been made, the efficacy of prayer will be at least presumptively established.

Prof. Tyndall is a practical common-sense man who grasps intricate problems with grace and ease, and whose suggestions are worthy of consideration. He desires to test the efficacy of prayer by a practical demonstration in some hospital where those who are suffering from all the maladies flesh is heir to—from the colic to a settled case of consumption.

Two hospitals of the same character of disease are standing side by side. Let one throw "physic to the dogs," dispense with porous plasters, anodynes, cordials, blisters, bleeding, expectorants, etc., and rely on the efficacy of prayer. Let the other adopt the most skillful means of treatment of modern times, and by this means forever settle one of the most vexed questions that ever puzzled the minds of men.

God does, or does not, answer prayer. If he condescends to mitigate the sufferings of humanity, the hospital where the poor are congregated, suffering from the excruciating pangs of disease, would be a suitable place for him to manifest his power.

By reading the Bible we find "Abraham prayed unto God, and God healed Abimelech." (Gen. xx. 17.) "When Moses prayed unto the Lord the fire was quenched." (Numbers xi. 2.) "Peter cured the blind by prayer" (Acts 9th chapter), etc., and Proverbs (xv. 29) affirms that the "Lord heareth the prayer of the righteous." Also in St. Mark (xi. 24) we read, "Therefore I say unto you, what things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them."

Now, then, if you have the blessed assurance that your prayers will be heard, why not accept the challenge, and, if you win, then away with Dr. Walker's vinegar bitters, Helmbold's buchu, John Bull's sarsapilla, Old Mother Winslow's soothing syrup, and last, but not least, Dr. Green's all-sticking balsam! Away with M.D.'s and their institutes of learning. Give room to the "man of prayer," for it is he who hath the balm of Gilead and can heal our wounds. But if you do not succeed in relieving the suffering by prayer, then what? Vice versa. But hold! reverend sirs; before you proceed would it not be well to let the voice of reason whisper to you a moment, asking you to crack the following theological nut:

Does not the Being that made the world govern it by laws that are inflexible, because they are the best?

If this Being did change his established laws to please an individual, a community, the inhabitants of this world, or the countless millions of worlds, would he not be a changeable Being? And if he governs the world by special and local exercise of his almightiness, and has the power to effect all things, other than through the course of natural law, why does he not displace sin with good, slavery with justice, poverty with plenty? Why does the Deity permit famine, disease and woe?

But, on the other hand, if God does not govern the world by special and local exercise of his almightiness, but by laws which are eternal and unchangeable, what good will your prayers do?

Would it not be far better if you would learn what God's fixed laws are by studying physiology, philosophy, science, etc., and then teach your intelligent audiences what those laws are, admonishing them to obey those laws if they would be happy, either here or "over the shining river?"

A LIBERAL THINKER.

Reply of Rev. R. D. Van Deursen, Pastor of the Paris Presbyterian Church.

DEAR SIR: Your inference from our "Biblical quotations and statements" is a correct one—God does hear and answer prayer, and if not then the Bible is false. And we infer from your Biblical quotations and statements that you believe that "the Being that made the world governs it by laws that are inflexible because they are the best;" "by laws that are eternal and unchangeable," and, therefore, you ask, "what good will your prayers do?" From this stand-point you suggest that we prove the efficacy of prayer by accepting the challenge of Prof. Tyndall, who desires, as you say, to test it by the separation of a hospital into wards which shall or shall not receive the special prayers of the Christian public, and thus presumptively establish the fact.

In reply to the suggestion, I will state that the challenge has been accepted, and the Christian world are prepared to furnish the facts. You supply the proof of the efficacy of prayer in your own article. You quote the solemn assertion of Moses that "Abraham prayed unto God and God healed Abimelech." Is Moses a trustworthy witness or not? Luke, a physician of some note in his day, says, in writing the Acts of the Apostles that "Peter cured the blind by prayer." His testimony is surely as good and as worthy of credence as would be the sworn statement of "A Liberal Thinker" of our day to facts which he should witness in the Edgar County Almshouse if he should sign it and publish it in the *Gazette*. Moses and Luke tell us of facts, and we believe them. God answers the challenge before it was made. But you suggest in spite of this that we prove it to you. If you will not believe Moses, nor Abraham, nor Isaac, nor Ezekial, nor Isaiah, nor Luke, nor John, nor Paul, when they not only declare that God answers prayer, but give us facts in proof of it, we may infer that you would not be satisfied if your hospital suggestion would be carried out now in our county. Well, bring on your hospital; the first thing to be done is to get men to consent to lie down in that prayerless ward. When you have done that, then secure the pledge of the entire race that no petition shall go up to God for them, (for the test will not be an honest one if, while we cease praying here in Edgar county, there are millions of Christians praying for all the sick,) and then at the end of three years gather in your certificates from all the world, stating that no prayer has been offered during all that time by any

individual for any in the prayerless ward, and then compare the facts, and if they are against us then we will agree to take down our churches and give up our praying. And if you say the thing is an impossibility, we ask why do you suggest that we do things which you know are impossibilities?

But you say if God heals the sick in answer to prayer then "throw physic to the dogs." Are you not willing that God shall answer prayer for the sick by intermediate use of means? No Christian man ever presumed to dictate to God how he should accomplish his purposes and answer his prayer, and therefore your logic is at fault if you argue that because God hears prayer we must "away with our M. D.'s and their institutes of learning." We do not neglect our plowing and cultivation of our wheat fields because we have been taught to pray for our daily bread, but use the means and pray for God's blessing upon them.

Mr. Talmadge says truly: "If God made us (and I think he did), and if the Bible is true (and I am rather disposed to think it is), then it is not strange that prayer does traverse natural cause, aye, that it introduces a new cause. When God made the law he did not make it so strong that he could not break it. If God made our bodies, when they are broken he is the one to mend them; and it is reasonable that we should call him in to do it. If my furnace in the cellar breaks down, there is no one so competent to repair it as the manufacturer. If the body is disordered, call in the maker of it. God did not make the law and then run away from it. What is a law of nature? It is God's usual way of doing things. But He has said that if His children ask Him to do a thing, and He can consistently do it, He will do it. Go on with your pills and plasters and nostrums and elixirs and your catholicon, but remember that the mightiest agent in your recovery is prayer."

But if you say this is all imagination, the church rises with her millions of witnesses, and there are hundreds of them here in Edgar county, who will tell you they have tested the power of prayer in the sick-room and proved its efficacy. Bring our own Christian physicians to the witness-stand and ask them if they can tell you of facts which prove it. The fact that such men as Tenbrook and Todd and Woolley and Miller and Hays are to-day members of the Christian church proves this, if nothing else, that they have tested prayer and believe it. And if the testimony of Prof. Tyndall is so very valuable and desirable, is not the testimony of such men as Newton and Pascal and Luther and Erasmus and Wesley and Knox and Calvin and Havelock and Washington and many of the most learned and gifted of the race worth something? You ask again "Why does the Deity permit famine, disease and woe?" I am not presumptuous enough to say why God permits anything, except because it pleases Him. But you inquire also: "Would it not be far better for us to learn what God's fixed laws are by studying physiology, philosophy, science," etc. I answer that it is far better to study all of God's laws than to study a part, and, best of all, to study his moral laws which are given us in the Bible and admonish our hearers not only to obey physical law but moral law, if they would be happy here and "over the shining river," for I beg you to notice that your law of present physical life, and your physiology and philosophy and science does not even so much as tell you there is anything "over the shining river." You get that from the Bible, which you do not profess to believe. Our Bible clearly reveals the life that is to come. Your science does not reveal anything beyond this life. We are not simply teachers of physiology, etc., but our mission is to preach the gospel which our Bibles contain, and its precious promises both concerning the life that now is and that which is to come, and among them that blessed one which the Bible so clearly reveals, and which the experience of every praying man has proved, "Ask and ye shall receive," and thousands like it, to lead the soul to pray to God, who is the hearer and answerer of prayer.

And I now suggest that you have the manliness to write hereafter over your own honest name, and do not sneak behind an anonymous signature. Gentlemen who ask honest questions will always receive courteous treatment "from the clergy," and no sincere seeker after truth need be ashamed of himself or afraid to confess it.

R. D. VAN DEURSEN.

Reply to Rev. Van Deursen.

You say that Prof. Tyndall's challenge has been accepted, and the Christian world are prepared to furnish the facts. Let us have them.

Moses and the parties you referred to did not use any intermediate use of means. They did not carry a medicine chest; did they? Now the doctors ad-

minister the medicine to their patients, relying upon the efficacy of medicine and not prayer. What would the physicians think if some professor of medicine would give the following prescription:

R. Comp. syr. stil. sylv. oz. iv.  
Iod. potasso dr. ss.  
M.

"Before giving the above, kneel down by the patient's side and make a regular speech to the Almighty; telling him how good He is; how powerful a being He is; what a merciful and fine fellow He is generally; that you are the chief of sinners, a crawling worm of the dust; that your patient is very sick, and that you would like for him to change his law and cure your patient, if he is not "foreordained" to die now. After which, give of the above one dram three times a day."

Do you suppose the well-read doctors you referred to would have any faith in the above prescription in this enlightened day? Supposing that one of your arteries was ruptured; that there was not a moment to be lost in the application of proper remedies to stop the flowing of your life's blood, what would you think of the physician who, being called to your bedside, would drop upon his knees and offer up a loud and long prayer to the Almighty for to stop the flow of your blood? Methinks you would demand the efficacy of bandages, etc., and not of prayer. Have you any evidence to show that the praying physician has better success in the treatment of disease than the nonpraying physician? If not, your argument is only a dodge, a convenient dodge, nothing more. The older the world gets the more incredulous it becomes on the subject. Four little children were playing by a creek near Buffalo. One of them, a girl, fell in, but was rescued by a dog in plenty of time to be restored to life by proper remedies. Instead of taking her to a house near by, her playmates organized a prayer-meeting over the body, and put up devout petitions for instantaneous recovery. They prayed earnestly. They clasped their little hands, closed their eyes, glistening with child-like innocence and love, bowed down their knees in holy reverence and with their petitions moistened with tears they prayed! What beautiful supplications—so child-like, and, withal, beaming with innocence and love! They entreated God to bring her back instantaneously to life. They could see no reason why their Father in heaven, animated with tender regard and parental love, should not resuscitate their drowned companion. Yet, instead of administering the proper remedies for her recovery, they foolishly prayed, as you would have us believe the doctors do. But they soon found, however, that they might as well pray for a pickled sardine to be restored to life as the one lying before them. Had they at once made the alarm and given an opportunity for the proper remedies to be administered, the probability is that the unfortunate girl's life would have been saved. Prayer will not answer as a cathartic, expectorant, etc., nor will it restore the drowned to life.

You say that "when God made the law he did not make it so strong that he could not break it." Very well, then; if he loves good and has the power to prevent evil, why, then, I ask again, so much famine, disease and woe? You don't know why, "except that it pleases him." Oh horror! What kind of a God do you worship?

Look at that pale, feeble woman. How careworn her features; what a solemn sadness illumines her countenance, and the tear glistens in her eye. Her heart is a tomb of buried sorrows—a sepulchre where she has shut up untold effects of all her misfortunes; as a wife and mother she contends with a drunken husband; suffers unspeakable agonies. She asks God to help her, she receives no help, which you admit he can give. Calmly, with a soul racked with social storms, she kills herself and child. What a scene? when there was a power to prevent it. Does he answer prayer? Does he break his law, thereby making himself an imperfect and changeable Being? Ask the woman on bended knees in the garret praying for a crust of bread, and who dies of starvation! You kneel down and pray for God to protect you. You say you believe that God hears you, yet, I notice, that while you pray to God, "who controls all things," you have several lightning rods on your church—His hosue(?) Oh consistency thou art a jewel. "No Christian man ever presumes to dictate to God how he should accomplish his purposes and answer his prayer." Let us see: "Oh Lord come down in our midst to-day. Come right now. Oh we pray Thee that thou wouldst prosper the cause and bring sinners to Christ." You don't dictate, do you?

"Physiology and science do not so much as tell us that there is anything 'over the shining river.'" You are mistaken. If science is the essence of



facts and proves anything, it proves beyond a doubt that man still lives beyond the grave. Indeed, did I have to depend upon the Bible alone for my belief in the future world my faith would be weak after reading "So he that goeth down to the grave shall come up no more." (Job vii. 9.)

"Neither have they any more a portion forever in anything that is done under the sun." (Ecc. ix. 5, 6.)

"They shall go down to the bars of the pit when our rest together is in the dust" (Job xvii. 13-16), and other passages of similar character.

"The Bible which you do not profess to believe!" I do not believe that everything in the Bible is true, nor do I think that you do. Do you believe a son can be two years older than his father? (See latter part of the 21st chapter and forepart of 22d chapter of 2d Chron.) I saw the statement that the American Bible Society has said that there are 150,000 mistakes in our English version of the Bible. Do you accept these errors?

You say you should admonish your readers to not only obey physical law but moral law. Does the following sound familiar? "Morality is no better than wickedness, and will save a soul no more than blasphemy can." If this is orthodoxy, then should we longer wonder that seven-eighths of the convicts in our penitentiaries are orthodox in their belief. Would not this belief that wickedness is as good as morality; virtue no better than vice, dishonesty as good as honesty, etc., naturally lead to the commission of those very crimes of which they were convicted?

I think there is very little science or physiology taught from the pulpit. "Gentlemen who ask honest questions will always receive courteous treatment from the clergy." My past experience has proven to the contrary; but, however, the future will tell as to yourself.

"My name." Why do you wish to know? What difference does it make to you whether my mother ever gave me a name, unless you wish to hurl your anathemas at me from the pulpit? In case you should wish to condescend to this, call me "SUNSHINE."

#### Another Reply by Mortimer.

EDITOR GAZETTE: I have read the Rev. Mr. Van Deursen's article in your paper of the 21st in reply to "A Liberal Thinker" of date 14th. As the subject interests me considerably, and though I do not view it in the same light the reverend gentleman does, I will venture to submit to you some of my views upon the subject, and if you deem them not intrusive and worthy a place in your columns please insert.

It is not at all singular that our reverend friend should maintain the great efficacy of prayer. Those whose occupation it is to pray for others, and whose livelihood is in good part secured thereby, very naturally insist upon the vital importance of prayer. Did you ever hear a physician who makes his living by the practice of medicine denouncing drugs and the use of them? Do you often hear practicing attorneys censuring the law and legal processes? Or, is it common for a life insurance agent to say a word against the policy and propriety of life insurance? "Every man to his trade," and as praying is part of the business of the clergy it is quite in order they should "stand up" for it.

The reverend gentleman, however, does not go as far as the Catholic clergy do; they not only maintain the efficacy of prayer, but also of holy water, blessed candles, beads, rosaries, penance, crosses, etc. A Catholic devotee will insist as strenuously upon the great virtues of holy water as Mr. Van Deursen does of prayer; but some of us fail to be convinced by either, and we see much of delusion in both.

The reverend gentleman perhaps uses as strong arguments as can be advanced in favor of the subject, but I am sorry he cannot find later authorities than Moses and Luke. They may have been very eminent and good men in their time, and possibly knew as much of the efficacy of prayer as is known now, but they lived so long ago in the dim, dark ages of the past that it seems like going a good way back for proof of a proposition which, if true can be easily demonstrated by unmistakable authorities of our own time and knowledge.

If prayer is efficacious in changing the Ruler of the universe, causing him to do what he otherwise would not do, I certainly think our Christian friends ought to be able to clearly prove it by persons now living among us, and whom we know to be truthful and trustworthy witnesses. If the matter cannot be established without going back from two to five thousand years and finding somebody who said somebody was sick—that somebody prayed and the sick were healed, would it not seem that prayer had at all events ceased to be of any practical benefit to us in these days, and has no efficacy to change the Eternal and Unchangeable?

The Rev. Mr. Van Deursen apparently accepts "A Liberal Thinker's" challenge as to trying the virtues of prayer in healing the sick, and says "bring on your hospital." But he makes the conditions so impracticable and so utterly unreasonable that the test could never be made. After a three years' trial "A Liberal Thinker" has to go to "all parts of the world" and take the affidavit of every individual that they had not at any time within the three years made a prayer general or special for the sick without excluding the prayerless ward in the hospital aforesaid. Before a thousandth part of the task could be accomplished, not only Mr. Van Deursen and "A Liberal Thinker" would have passed over the "shining river" but hundreds of millions of others who are to be used as witnesses in the case. If one prayerful individual, Pagan, Mahomedan or Christian, living, for instance, in Australia, Patagonia, or any other obscure corner of the earth, could be found who had within the three years made a prayer for the sick without excluding the particular ward in which the test was to be made, Mr. Van Deursen would doubtless claim that that prayer had "done the business" and caused the Ruler of heaven and earth to cure the sick of that particular ward, which otherwise he would not have done.

Now, if this test is ever to be made, would it not save a vast amount of time, labor and expense in going over the whole world to take the affidavit of every individual in it, for Mr. Van Deursen or some of his brethren of the clergy just to inform the Almighty that a test was to be made of the efficacy of prayer in two wards of a certain hospital, one having the benefit of prayer and the other not, and to request him not to interfere one way or the other in the latter-mentioned ward, and to take no notice for three years of any prayer for the sick, either general or special, so far as that ward was concerned? It seems to me if this arrangement could be made and the Lord was duly notified, requested and engaged, the business could be satisfactorily settled and the test made without all this travel, time, trouble and expense.

If prayer really has the efficacy that is claimed for it, it is of the highest importance that every inhabitant of the globe duly understands it; and if our Christian friends are so positive of it, why are they not willing to make a fair and practical test which will forever place the subject beyond a doubt? If on the other hand, their claims are untenable, and the Ruler of the universe is not constantly changed by the millions of prayers being continually offered up to him by educated as well as ignorant, bigoted and short-sighted mortals in all parts of the world, it is very well also that we should be aware of that fact, as thereby a great amount of effort, time, talent and expense could be saved to be directed in some more useful and profitable channel.

Mr. Van Deursen names five of our prominent and worthy physicians who are members of churches and believers in prayer. His notice of them is doubtless intended to be complimentary, but he does not tell us when they dispense to their patients a dose of calomel or blue mass whether they pray to God that it may act as a cathartic or alternative; nor when they administer ipecac, that it may nauseate; or quinine, that it may act as a tonic or stop the ague. He fails to notice Dr. Huston, Dr. Curl, Dr. Spangler, Dr. Armstrong, Dr. Johnson, Dr. Baum or Dr. Knight; and I hope his silence in reference to them implies no censure, for they are also worthy men, and many deem them equally as skillful as their orthodox and possibly more prayerful brethren. If prayer is necessary to make physic work, would not Dr. Armstrong's little sugar pills require a greater effort in prayer to make them operate than a full dose of calomel? Dr. Green, by the by, he should not have passed unnoticed. He is, I believe, also a praying physician; but it is questionable in which he has the most confidence—all-healing prayer or his "all-healing balsam."

Prayer, if you ever noticed it, Mr. Editor, is not, after all, of Christian origin or a Christian institution exclusively, but a practice borrowed from the Pagans, and in existence and taught thousands of years before the author of Christianity came into the world. The worshippers of Buddha, Brahma, Osiris, Fot, Yahoo, Thor, Odin, Jupiter, Allah, and hundreds of other gods, prayed to their deities thousands of years ago, firmly believing the same were influenced, placated, moved and appeased by the prayers thus offered. Savages and barbarians of all grades pray. The worshippers of the sun offer to it their prayers and supplications, and fancy they are heard and answered. Those who bow down to crocodiles and snakes are profuse in their prayers. The worshippers of dumb idols of stone, wood and metal are very prayerful, and feel confident their gods both hear and answer their prayers. The devout Mahometan prays regularly three times a day, always turning his face carefully toward Mecca, his holy city. Now if it can be correctly computed what all this ceaseless praying amounts to, would it

not be interesting to all classes to know just the net result? If praying is a pleasure to the devotees of prayer it is probably a harmless amusement, but as for real utility in changing the Creator of heaven and earth in his plans and purposes, I opine it will be found of no effect.

I have lived to see nearly three-score years. The first half of my life I was a believer in prayer, and practised it daily and devoutly. After many years, upon reviewing my life, I could not see that I had effected much by my prayers, and to this day I am unable to call to mind a single instance where I have reason to believe that any one of the thousands of prayers I have offered has had the slightest effect toward changing Deity in his operations toward myself or any portion of the world's inhabitants. I presume, as my prayers were sincere and honest and persistent, that they possessed about the usual amount of efficacy. And I cannot see but what my life for the last twenty-five years since I discontinued prayer has been just as moral, exemplary and useful as before, when I prayed several times a day from year's end to year's end.

My opportunities for observation of my fellow men have been fair. I have, of course, in my time known very many praying men and many who were not; but I have failed to see very much difference in the two classes. I have not found that praying physicians were more successful in the treatment of the sick than those who relied solely upon science. I have failed to see that praying lawyers were any more sure to win their cases than those who neglected prayer. I have not seen that praying merchants sold any more goods or made better profits than those who did not pray. I have failed to see that praying farmers have better crops, more timely rains, more productive soil, or finer cattle and hogs than those who did not pray at all. I therefore fail to see the advantage of so much time spent in prayer. My belief is that everything around us is governed by fixed and unchangeable laws that cannot be set aside or changed by entreaty or supplication—that every event that has ever transpired has had a natural and sufficient cause to produce it. As all results are the effects of causes, and as there are causes sufficient for all results, I cannot see the necessity of prayer to effect any changes or any results.

To my mind it would be perfectly useless for us to pray that every morning the sun might rise in the east and set in the evening in the west; that summer may year after year succeed winter and winter summer; that the laws of attraction and gravitation may not be suspended; that the atmosphere may continue to surround the earth; that light and heat may be regularly dispensed to us by the fountain of light; that twice two may always be four, but equally as sensible as the numberless prayers that are offered for all the blessings connected with our existence.

It is claimed there is a Being who hears all prayer and answers such as he sees fit; but if any one being is compelled to listen to the countless millions of prayers that are incessantly being made, would it not be enough to confuse and craze a mind far greater than Michael or Gabriel?

Let me ask what kind of a Deity it would be who every day, every hour, every minute—yes, every second—changed his plans and purposes in keeping with this constant outpouring of prayer, much of it ignorant, senseless, absurd, dictatorial and conflicting?

The Rev. Theodore Parker once said: "The only prayer that amounts to anything is *effort*," and I believe the position a correct one. In this kind of prayer, *well directed*, let us all freely improve and aim to excel, and I believe it will be far more profitable and satisfactory than this constant begging, beseeching and supplicating the *Unseen and Unknown* which the clergy so persistently tell us is so pleasing to Him and so necessary to ourselves.

The Rev. Mr. Van Deursen calls our attention to the fact that our ideas of a life beyond the grave are obtained from the Bible. I beg his pardon, but such is not the case. The much larger and older part of the Bible says little or nothing about a future existence, and all its promises, penalties and references are confined to this life only. The new testament vaguely throws out some observations about the "Heavenly Jerusalem," etc., but it was not written until long after the doctrine of a future life was taught and believed by many nations who were never Jews or Christians.

Mr. Van Deursen also alludes to God as being the maker of our bodies. He is "probably in the same sense as He is the maker of horses, dogs, fishes, worms and insects. I will not, however, enlarge upon this subject. I fear I have already been too prolix. I beg your pardon for trespassing so far upon your kindness.

D. B. MORTIMER.

[To be continued.]

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PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY THE LIBERAL ASSOCIATION OF PARIS, ILL.

VOL. 1, No. 2.

OCTOBER, 1873.

50CTS. PER YEAR.

## OUR PLATFORM.

We extend the right hand of fellowship to liberal minds of all grades and classes. We ask them not to adopt our special views and opinions—to see with our eyes or to understand with our reason. We are not "hide-bound," nor do we ask others to "measure their wheat in our half bushel." We embrace, as in one brotherhood, Liberals, Free Religionists, Rationalists, Spiritualists, Universalists, Unitarians, Friends, Infidels, Free Thinkers, and in short all who dare to think and judge for themselves. Let us compare our views; let us canvass each others' opinions and reasons, and see which has the better way. We have no creed or dogmas to ask others to subscribe to, but are in favor of independent thought, free enquiry, free speech, and everything that tends to break the chains of mental bondage, ignorance and superstition. As it is not possible or desirable that all persons should think exactly alike, we do not expect to bring others to our standard of thought.

We wish not needlessly to wound the feelings of any, but hold to speaking frankly what we honestly believe to be true. We are not in favor of a "milk and water" diet for men and women, but something more positive and substantial. We are firmly opposed to priestcraft, the errors, superstitious and false creeds of past dark ages, and in favor of life, truth and progress.

## DEMANDS OF LIBERALISM.

The following nine propositions by Francis E. Abbot, of *The Index*, we endorse most cordially, and they are approved by liberal minds all over the country:

1. We demand that churches and other ecclesiastical property shall no longer be exempt from taxation.
2. We demand that the employment of chaplains in congress, in state legislatures, in the army and navy, and in prisons, asylums, and all other institutions supported by public money, shall be discontinued.
3. We demand that all public appropriations for sectarian, educational and charitable institutions shall cease.
4. We demand that all religious services now sustained by the government be abolished; and especially that the use of the Bible in public schools, whether ostensibly as a text-book or avowedly as a book of religious worship, shall be prohibited.
5. We demand the appointment, by the President of the United States or by the governors of the various states, of all religious festivals or fasts shall wholly cease.
6. We demand that the judicial oath in the courts and all other departments of the government shall be abolished, and that simple affirmation, under the pains and penalties of perjury, shall be established in its stead.
7. We demand that all laws directly or indirectly enforcing the observance of Sunday as the Sabbath shall be repealed.
8. We demand that all laws looking to the enforcement of "Christian" morality shall be abrogated

and that all laws shall be conformed to the requirements of natural morality, equal rights and impartial liberty.

9. We demand that not only in the constitution of the United States and of the several states, but also in the practical administration of the same, no privilege or advantage shall be conceded to Christianity or any other special religion; that our entire political system shall be founded and administered on a purely secular basis, and whatever changes shall prove necessary to this end shall be consistently, unflinchingly and promptly made.

## TO THE FRIENDS OF FREE THOUGHT.

We delayed the issuing of this number for a week or more awaiting the influx of names to our subscription list. We are frank to confess they have not come in as we expected. We have not had much experience in journalism, and possibly we were too sanguine, and expected too much at first. Some have done nobly—taking a lively interest in our enterprise, sending us clubs of from ten to twenty-five names, and right here we wish to thank those friends; and beg to assure them we fully appreciate the interest and kindness they have manifested. But truth compels us to state that there are hundreds and we may say thousands of others to whom we sent the initial number of our little sheet who have not responded either by sending in their own names as subscribers, or those of their friends. We flattered ourselves that we were presenting a positive, fearless and outspoken sheet in the cause of truth and free speech at so low a price that a large majority of liberal minds to whose attention our pages might be brought, would resolve to support us by sending in their names accompanied by the small sum of fifty cents. Our ardor has been much checked—our disappointment has been considerable; that so many persons of liberal sentiments to whom we sent our pages, should decide not to lend us their aid. We about come to the conclusion that liberals, after all are not liberal; and we are at a loss whether to attribute it to it is the latter. In view of the generosity with which members of orthodox churches contribute

## APATAY OR PENURIOUSNESS.

We are unwilling to think sums of money from \$25 to \$500 and often much more, towards the building of a church or paying a preacher, we are loth to believe our liberal friends are unwilling to give fifty cents a year, for a paper like the Truth Seeker, thereby "giving a mite" towards helping along the cause of Truth and Right in our land.

It is for the liberal and independent minds of the country to decide whether the Truth Seeker shall be sustained—whether like a fixed star it shall shine with clear and permanent light year after year, or whether, like a meteor, it shall scintillate for a moment and then go into darkness. To make it shine permanently, it needs patrons in all parts of the country, to send in the insignificant sum of "fifty cents a year," and to induce as many others to subscribe for it as possible. Men and Brethren, decide how it shall be. Have we too many outspoken or-

gans of independent thought or mental liberty? Is there too much being done towards removing from the minds of men the cloud of superstition, darkness and priestcraft, which, like a pall has been enveloping the world for centuries? Would it not be well if there were more organs of fearless truth? If we had a score of them in various parts of our extensive country, it would not be too many. We can hardly have too much light—the popular mind can hardly have too much food for thought. Then, *friends of truth and progress*, we ask you to give us aid. "Hold up our hands" that we may prevail in the warfare we have commenced, encourage us in the rugged road we have chosen, and we will endeavor to perform our duty faithfully, to render satisfaction to our friends, and return to you the full worth of your money.

Kind reader, we appeal now directly to you. The Truth Seeker needs your help. Please at once make us the little remittance we ask (if you have not already done so) and induce as many of your friends and acquaintances as possible to do the same. Several kind friends in various localities have interested themselves in our favor, and sent in clubs of varying numbers. If we had one active friend of this kind in every community, the Truth Seeker would soon have a list of 20,000 names. Would such a state of things be desirable? A little effort on the part of many friends and it can be accomplished. Dr. B. F. Gardner, of Atlanta, Ill., sent us in a few days ago a list of twenty-six subscribers, and up to this time that is the highest number any one person has sent us. Who will excel that? Who will do as well? Who next? Many other friends have done well and sent us very satisfactory lists, but we have not space to give names. We only ask friends of the cause to do what they reasonably can to extend our circulation. If they send us twenty names—good, we will be glad. If ten, good again, we will be grateful. If but five, still good, we will appreciate the kindness. If but two or one, we will cheerfully receive them and you shall have our heartfelt thanks.

We did not engage in this enterprise for making money, and we so stated in our first number. We are willing to work for little or no compensation—Nor did we embark in it to lose money. Our circumstances are such we cannot continue the publication of a paper that is not self-sustaining. In this view of the facts, and the tardy influx of names, we hesitated several days, debating in our own mind whether to go ahead or to stop—whether to continue the fearless little Truth Seeker, or to let it die in early infancy, and to return the subscriptions we had received to those who sent them. While in this state of mind we concluded to write to two friends, though never seen by us, and to break to them our misgivings upon the matter. The first was to Herman Wettstein, of Harvard, Illinois, from whom we received the first fifty cents that came into the treasury of the Truth Seeker for subscription;—the second to E. G. Potter, of Bellevue, Iowa, a venerable friend, over eighty-two years of age, who had evinced a lively interest in our paper, sending us in subscriptions for nearly

twenty copies—the largest number we had received up to that time.

They kindly replied to us and we take the liberty of giving our readers the perusal of their letters:

HARVARD, ILL., Sept. 23, 1873.

MR. D. M. BENNETT:—Dear Sir: I must confess to having been disagreeably surprised by seeing in your note that our liberal brethren are so slow in coming forth to help sustain our champion. I entertained not the least doubt that the rate at which you placed your monthly would secure it the hearty co-operation of every free thinker in the country, and I cannot disabuse my mind of the notion that they will yet. I presume establishing a paper on a firm basis is like building up any other trade—it requires time. Nor was Rome built in a day, (nor a year for that matter), but as we are furnished free gratis with this indispensable, provided we succeed in keeping soul and body together; in the mean time all may turn out well yet. Of course the expenses connected with setting the ball in motion must necessarily greatly exceed the immediate returns. I don't believe, however, the liberal element of the country is at such a low ebb as not to be able to furnish the necessary wherewith to keep it a running, aye, and at a constantly accelerated speed at that. It is not from lack of will, or reluctance, but on account of not being aware, as yet, of the existence of your "little bantling" that the liberally inclined masses seem delinquent in rallying around it, to nurse it and to fan its frail spark of vitality into vigorous life. If every one of your present subscribers, friends and sympathizers would go to work with a hearty good will, canvassing his town or neighborhood, or if he feels not disposed to this exertion, have a copy of your paper on his center table or counter, calling the attention of every caller or customer to it, much good could be accomplished in this manner. The satisfaction they would experience in thus adding their mite of strength in your behalf would more than recompense them for the little extra exertion. What Liberal is there who would not gladly give a paltry half dollar to help sustain the good cause; and who would not devote an occasional half hour to its furtherance, when the consciousness of having been instrumental in relieving but one poor soul out of the clutches of priestcraft would repay them a hundred fold, not saying anything of the favor conferred, and benefit accruing from perusing the sprightliest little sheet published in the country.

Therefore I say, let every one put his shoulder to the wheel with a right hearty good will. Bread thus cast upon the waters will yield a thousand fold. Yours Fraternally,

H. WETTSTEIN.

P. S. I shall make another "desperate effort" to see if I can send you a few more names from this locality. W.

BELLEVUE, JACKSON CO., IOWA, }  
September 24, 1873. }

FRIEND D. M. BENNETT:—Your kind, though rather discouraging letter just came to hand, and in reply would say that I expected more encouragement than you state you have. A paper like yours is much needed in the Liberal field. The price being within the reach of almost every one, and containing as it will and does the main principles of Liberalism. I have been surprised to see the apathy of Liberals generally; themselves being out of the reach of hell and the meshes of priestcraft, do not think of the thousands that are still held in that bondage. They should remember Liberalism is the growth of reason and to obtain that often needs a starting point, which your paper would give.

You state in your first number you printed 12,000 copies. Judging from my own feelings the number was too small. Send them out and await the result.

I consider your first number is worth double the subscription price. I would like the paper continued though not at your expense—better perhaps that those willing dupes live on in the fear of hell than you in poverty.

You will please send the first number to those names I send you for specimen copies, as I believe it will awaken a sense of the benefit from the continuance of your paper, and may induce them to subscribe. Hoping your forebodings as to the success of your paper, may not be realized, and that I may hear from you soon, I remain yours,

E. G. POTTER.

P. S. Hold on—do not give up.

We have thus given a statement of our misgivings and the grounds for them. Possibly we were too susceptible to discouragement. Names since have been daily and gradually coming in, and we have resolved to go on and make the Truth Seeker a success. We again appeal to our friends to give

us their aid. Let those who have not subscribed do so at once, and let all procure as many subscribers for us as possible. Send us also the names of such liberal-minded persons as you think would like our paper, that we may send them a specimen copy. With your cordial co-operation we feel fully satisfied we can make this sheet a success.

We shall not continue to send specimen numbers to those who have had the first and second. If they wish to continue to read the paper, they of course will subscribe.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

During the misgivings we felt as to the result of our enterprise, as stated in a foregoing column, the reception of the following letters and many others of a similar tenor, afforded us unalloyed gratification. The assurance that our efforts were appreciated by so many sensible friends, and that they looked with favor upon our little sheet, nerved us to struggle on to success with the task we had undertaken. We sincerely thank our good friends for their kind words, and we beg to assure them that such tokens of interest in our behalf will always be received with gratitude. We take the liberty of laying several of these letters that have been sent us before our readers and would be glad if they would afford them the same amount of pleasure they did us:

CARONDELET, MO., Sept. 9, 1873.

DEAR TRUTH SEEKER:—I received a copy of your paper, and am glad to see one more "gun" in the field of infidelity. To be unfaithful to the monster Religion, is, I think, one of the most beautiful symptoms of this age; how bright it looks to see poor down-trodden humanity, struggling so valiantly and successfully against this old heathenism, under the new name of Christianity; how hopeful it makes one feel, that we live in an age that we dare attack this monster, that has ruined every nation that has existed, and yet the people of the world have not got their eyes open.

Enclosed find one dollar for two copies. A thought has just come into my head. Would you not do better financially, and have a larger field for your work in St. Louis? The Index has moved to Boston for this reason, and here is the hot-bed of Catholicism, and other religions, and I learn that Liberals are quite plenty, but shy; and I think cowardly, but with a little encouragement, would, no doubt, bring many of them out. Think of it. L. T. W.

CHILLICOTHE, ILL., Sept. 29, 1873.

GENTS:—Your little paper, "The Truth Seeker," has just been received, and its contents perused with a deal of interest. Its title and general appearance is good; the articles are well chosen. Your able editorial on Priestcraft and Science Contrasted, is worth the price of the paper, and ought to be read by every thinking man and woman in Christendom. I have seldom, if ever, perused a paper of so small dimensions which had so much practical common sense reading matter and embodying so much uncontroversial truth, and I have no doubt if it is well patronized as it should be by every liberal in the land, it will have a tendency to break the chains of superstition and error upon the human mind. I believe the time has arrived, to a certain extent, when an honest skeptic is as much respected, and stands as high in the estimation of his fellow men, as any other class. Believing also that "The Truth Seeker" will be an auxiliary to that fearless and consistent advocate of human progress, the "Boston Investigator," I cheerfully subscribe to its platform, and enclose one dollar for two copies, one of which I shall retain for future reference, and other to hand around among my liberal friends, and at the same time induce them "to go and do likewise."

Trusting that your efforts may be successful, I remain yours in the cause of truth and progress.

WM. McLEAN.

EDITOR TRUTH SEEKER:—I accidentally laid my eyes on a copy of your first number of the Truth Seeker. I was wonderfully taken with the sprightly little sheet. In my case it was "love at first sight," and I determined at once to have the paper. Please mail it to me at Munster, Illinois. I have many friends and acquaintances who I am sure would be delighted with the paper. I give a list of names below, to whom you will please send specimens of your first number, I am fully persuaded you will materially enlarge your circulation by so doing. Your location I think is just right, and Paris is just the town in which to publish your paper and to seek for truth. Dr. Taylor, who was once a teacher in your city, sought for truth there and found it. I would give you every encouragement to go ahead—push forward the well begun work. Seek and you shall find—Knock, and it shall be opened unto you.

I should think from the reading of your first number, that you have not only sought for, but actually have already found and drawn copiously from the great fountain of truth. Upon this part of the State, (Livingston county), we have a good deal of truth laying around loose, but I don't think that it is as pure an article as you have down your way. Ours is truth and lies mixed, about half and half—but then our philosophy up this way runs about thus: Truth and error are actually essential to each other; as much so at least as light and darkness are essential to each other in the natural world. If it was not for the one we could not determine the other; having nothing whereby to compare it but itself, we could not determine its good qualities. If it was not for darkness we could not appreciate the blessings of sunshine. Everything must be enjoyed by contrast. Our philosophy in this part of the State may be peculiar; but then we profess to be a peculiar people, jealous of good works. With us, truth and error, good and evil, are according to the nature of things essential to each other, and without evil (so called), we would never be able to tell what good was. In Livingston county, evil is the raw material out of which we manufacture good. And we generally manage the manufacturing process so as to secure to us a very large percent of a first class article of that very desirable commodity. I discover by reading the Bible, that even the apostles thought it an advantage to mix in with truth a certain percent of lies. Paul says you know when complaining of some of his opposers, "If the grace of God superabounds through my lie, why am I yet accounted a sinner?" And I find that his followers have, following his example, mixed into all their sayings and doings, a large proportion of what they call "white lies," but all for the good of the

order and progress of the cause, in the world. But white lies to us up here are as scarce as white crows; all are black. 'Tis true we may have the degrees of black, blacker and blackest, but of the white, whiter and whitest kind, we have none at all. Brethren, would it not be an improvement in your paper to devote at least one page of it to lies exclusively? I think that by so doing your readers would be enabled to see the truth more clearly. If you should make that arrangement, I will promise you to send down occasionally, from this part of the State, some lies of the regular old fashioned, orthodox kind. Black, sublime, old devilish whoppers!

JOHN SYMPHES, Streator, Ill.

We will be pleased to have our friend send on the lies. We will try and find a place for them in our columns. —[Ed.]

207 E. 45TH STREET, NEW YORK, Sept. 9, 1873.

Just received your first number. Think highly of it. Call it a first rate paper. Enclosed is my subscription. Send it regularly. I take all liberal papers, as they are needed—the more the better. The tone of the Truth Seeker is high and sound. Keep it so.

Yours, &c., M. ALTMAN.

SACRAMENTO, CAL., Sept. 17, 1873.

PUBLISHERS TRUTH SEEKER:—Mr. Freeman, of Stockton, showed me last night a copy of your little Journal. I am much pleased with it. Its style and tone, as well as the matter it contains, are admirable. I wish you all possible success in your enterprise. I enclose subscription price. Send a copy to Mrs. Sarah A. Underwood, Chicopee Falls, Mass. Very truly yours, B. F. UNDERWOOD.

DAVENPORT, IOWA, Sept. 16, 1873.

GENTS:—Your Truth Seeker is much needed in these parts, where liberals have no access to any periodicals. In short, papers do not publish anything to offend any part of their subscribers—no frank independence; and they dare not debate with us. I wish you to send three copies of your paper one year—two for myself, and one for a friend—find \$1.50 enclosed. Yours truly, R. McINTOSH.

WAPELLO, IOWA, Sept. 23, 1873.

PUBLISHERS TRUTH SEEKER:—GENTS: Enclosed find one year's subscription for your paper. There are a few liberals here, but most of them are afraid to speak out their sentiments for fear of losing the good will of some dogmatical priest or superstitious neighbor. So far as I am concerned, I am an atheist, and I care not who knows it; and whenever Christian, Jew, Mormon or Mohammedan can convince me of my error and prove that they are right, then I will be a follower of their peculiar religion; otherwise will remain and die as I am. I will try and get some subscribers for you. Hoping to hear from you often through the Truth Seeker, I remain yours, &c., W. P. KREMER.

TITUSVILLE, PA., Sept. 15, 1873.

EDITOR TRUTH SEEKER:—Sir: The first number of the Truth Seeker is received. Enclosed find subscription. Being myself a very earnest "truth seeker," I am naturally in favor of every effort made to find it. I will try and get you some subscribers.

Be fearless and persevering in your search sir, and I doubt not, as I heartily wish, you will find both truth and success. MORRIS EASTEN.

MICHIGAN CITY, IND., Sept. 15, 1873.

DEAR EDITOR:—I like the object of your paper. I have felt the same influence from the churches and press in this city, to shut off reply to abuse and misrepresentation that has caused you to publish a paper of your own in yours; and I wish we had one such in every city in America. I will work for your paper free of charge.

Truly yours, L. S. HART.

DENVER, COLO., Sept. 18, 1873.

EDITOR TRUTH SEEKER:—Thanks for a copy of your paper, which I duly received and carefully read. Well am I repaid for the time I have spent in reading it, and I recommend it to all liberal minded persons. To recommend it to Christians would be useless, as they are too bigoted to read anything which is at variance with their pet views. I find the Truth Seeker lively, intellectual, and what is more important—truthful. Your platform "suits me to a T" as well as others, who authorize me to send you their subscriptions. Enclosed find \$5.00 for eleven copies. Yours truly, CHAS. ROTH.

COAST SURVEY OFFICE, WASHINGTON.

Please send two copies to my address, for which find enclosed \$1. The Liberal Association of Paris, certainly deserves much credit for their effort to lessen the amount of mental bondage. I trust the Truth Seeker will be largely patronized and read.

J. AL.

CLEARFIELD, PA., Sept. 26, 1873.

MR. EDITOR:—Your little sheet is a very welcome guest, and may it illuminate the minds of all it reaches. We have this week organized a free thought society, and will raise a library and get tracts to distribute as soon as we can. We had twenty members the first night and hope to double it the next meeting. There are hundreds of liberal minds that would come out square if it were not for the fear of their bread and butter falling them. When a few laboring men depend on day's wages among a set of bigots, they have to be mute or suffer prosecution at the hands of professors of religion (so called). But the time is coming when men will think and reason for themselves without paying the clergy for doing it for them.

A. T. S.

## NOTICES OF THE PRESS.

From the Religio-Philosophical Journal.

"THE TRUTH SEEKER."—We have received the first number of this liberal exponent. It is nicely printed, the articles are ably written and we see no reason why it should not become a general favorite.

From the Banner of Light.

No. 1, Vol. 1 of The Truth Seeker, an eight-page monthly published by the Liberal Association, of Paris, Illinois, has come to hand. It is devoted to science, morals, free enquiry and the diffusion of liberal sentiments, and is deserving of patronage from the friends of free thought.

From the Boston Investigator.

"THE TRUTH SEEKER."—This is the good name of a new liberal paper just commenced by the Liberal Association, of Paris, Ill. It makes a handsome appearance typographically, and contains throughout the right kind of doctrine, as the paper is devoted to science, morals, free thought, free enquiry and the diffusion of liberal sentiments. This is an excellent platform, and The Truth Seeker deserves success, and we hope it may receive it.



From the Terre Haute Daily Express.

The Truth Seeker is the name of a handsome, eight-page monthly paper issued by the Liberal Association, of Paris, Ill. It is devoted to free thought and the diffusion of liberal sentiments. Its motto is, "prove all things and hold fast to that which is good." It is edited with very marked ability.

From the Quincy (Ill.) Times.

We are in receipt of Vol. I, No. 1, of The Truth Seeker, a monthly sheet published by the Liberal Association, of Paris, Illinois, at the low price of fifty cents a year.

"Prove all things and hold fast to that which is good." The Truth Seeker, in its platform of principles, says:—"We do not ask others to adopt our special views and opinions—to see with our eyes and to understand with our reason, but to measure their wheat in our half bushel. We have no creed or dogmas, but favor free thought, free speech, and everything that tends to break the chains of mental bondage, ignorance and superstition."

The Truth Seeker has drawn its line to the great moral level, and as long as it adheres unflinchingly to that line it must be respected and approved.

Truth is mighty and will command the respect of all.

From the Carroll (Ill.) County Gazette, J. R. Howlett, Editor.

We have received the initial number of a monthly, eight-page paper published by the Liberal Association, of Paris, Ill. Its title is The Truth Seeker, and it is devoted to science, morals, free thought, free inquiry and the diffusion of liberal sentiments. Fifty cents a year. It is well printed and the number before us contains much valuable and interesting reading matter. We hope to see many more similar publications, not only published but well sustained.

From the Northern Granger, St. Charles, Ill.

A FREE PAPER.—The Truth Seeker, a paper published monthly by the Liberal Association of Paris, Ill., is upon our table. It is "devoted to science, morals, free thought, free inquiry and the diffusion of liberal sentiments"—most worthy objects. It is a model of mechanical neatness and a giant intellectually. It can be had for the small sum of fifty cents per annum, by addressing The Truth Seeker, Paris, Ill. We gladly extend to our Brother Association "the right hand of fellowship," and sincerely wish them an abundant success in their noble undertaking. We hope our liberal friends will give this paper the generous support it so richly merits.

### SCIENTIFIC MEMORANDA.

"M. P. Bert suggests that evil consequences to men and animals of a sudden change from a compressed atmosphere to one of normal pressure, is owing to the conversion of the dissolved nitrogen in the blood to the free state. The gas thus set free, by occupying the capillary vessels of various organs, obstructs the circulation in those vessels. If the quantity is small, it tends to act in the lumbar region and on the spinal cord, causing softening of the cord and paraplegia. If it is large, the lungs are obstructed and the action of the heart interfered with."

"In 1857, Mr. Rabuteau announced that the poisonous power of metals was greater as their atomic weights were higher and their specific weights lower. He now shows that the atomic weights of calcium and potassium being nearly the same, the toxic effects produced by injecting similar solutions of these salts into the blood, are also the same, both acting as poisons to the muscles and causing death by the arrest of the action of the heart, when administered in sufficient doses."

"M. M. Beequerel finds that during rainy seasons the temperature of a soil covered by vegetation is about one degree centigrade lower than that of a naked soil, the temperature being taken at a depth of from eighteen to twenty inches. He explains this difference by the fact that the roots of the plants mat the soil together in such a manner that rain, which presents the same temperature as the air, cannot permeate the soil covered by vegetation as readily as it does that which is free from roots."

"M. Champouillon recommends the use of the silicate of soda in the treatment of all superficial wounds and abrasion of the skin. It acts, he says, not only as an antiseptic, but also protects the surface from the action of the air and of any germs it may contain. He also states that excellent results have followed its use as an injection in cases of ulceration or prevalent discharge from all mucous membranes. The strength of the solution is to be varied according as it is applied to the skin or to the cavities lined with mucous membranes."

In view of the timidity and want of fairness usually evinced by the secular press in reference to Liberalism and free thought, we cheerfully give place to the following lucid and suggestive article by J. G. Holland, editor of Scribner's Monthly,

[From Scribner for September.]

### THE OUTLOOK.

"If any of our thoughtful readers have omitted the perusal of Mr. Blauvelt's article in the August number of Scribner on "Modern Skepticism," we beg them to recall the number and read every word of that paper. They will there obtain a view of the infidelity of the day which will give them food for reflection and suggestions for action. No paper published during the last five years has presented the extent and nature of modern skepticism with such faithfulness as this. It ought to attract universal attention to the two papers which will follow it from the same pen and summon the whole christian host to battle under leaders who know something about the basis of christianity besides the traditional "apologies." It is not a form of christianity that is now in question. It is not a question between sects. It is a question which involves christianity itself, and the authority of the Bible. Have we a divine religion at all? Is christianity anything better than Buddhism, or of any higher authority. If the christian optimist supposes that these questions are to be met and decided by the "pooh-pooh" of sectaries or the dicta of professional teachers, or the resolutions of conferences or councils he is very much mistaken. We are inclined to

think the pulpit and the distinctively religious press will have very little to do with the matter, and that the question will at last be settled where it has been unsettled. The pulpit can do very little in any direct struggle with infidelity, because—not to mention other reasons—infidelity does not come within its reach. The religious press can do very little, because infidelity does not and will not read it. Both these powers must be content to preach christianity as well as they can and leave the struggle to be decided among those who have a common desire to get at the truth, whatever that may be."

"It may as well be understood among christian men and women that they are every day doing that which brings their religion under suspicion with the unbelieving world. The world does not see the fruits of that divine influence which is claimed for the christian religion by its professors. Nothing is more notorious than that the educated men of France, Italy and Spain are infidel; and nothing has been better calculated to make them so than the whole policy of the Catholic Church in those countries. They have seen a populace kept in ignorance and poverty through many generations by a Catholic Church. They have seen that populace fed with traditions, by a priesthood that is foolish if it knows no better, and knavish if it does know better; they have seen that priesthood taking sides with tyranny against every popular struggle for liberty and liberal institutions; they have seen that priesthood grasping at wealth and power, and intriguing for temporal influence all over the world. This is the Christianity they have seen; it is all they have seen, and their conclusions when made against the Catholic Church are made against Christianity itself. Does any body-blame them? Not we!"

The influences of the present form of christianity in England are very little better than in the nations mentioned. The world looks on and sees livings bought and sold like commissions in the army—places made in the church for younger sons—wine drinking, pleasure-loving men in the pulpit; and then when it sees any action, it is with candles, and vestments, and rites and ceremonies that have no more vital relation to the redemption of mankind and the service of God than they have to the policy of the Czar in Turkey. Is it supposed that men of common sense do not and cannot see through all this stuff and nonsense?"

Drifting toward Romanism, grasping after new and old machinery, busied only with husks and human inventions, quarreling over haubles, excommunicating their own free thinkers and free talkers, obsequious to worldly graduers, mingling in politics, frowning upon non-conformists as social inferiors, the great majority of the English clergy are doing what they can to manufacture infidels out of all Englishmen who do their own thinking.

"And here in America how much better are we doing?" We fritter away our energies and waste our substance in building costly churches for the rich, in multiplying sects and keeping up the differences between them, and in aping the wretched religious fooleries of the Old World. Our organization into a hundred sects amount to a disorganization of christianity. There are thousands of towns lying religiously dead to-day because there is not christianity enough in them to unite in obtaining the services of a Minister who has brains enough to teach them, and, as a rule, there are from three to six religious societies in all these towns—starveling churches—monuments only to the ambition of the sects they represent. The world looks on and scoffs. The world looks on and recognizes the lack of power in christianity, or such christianity as it sees, to unify the church in feeling and effort, and it learns only contempt for it. Every pulpit as a rule is a party pulpit. Every religious press is a party press—published in the interest of a sect and supported by it. So unusual is the spectacle of various bodies of christians coming together for the accomplishment of a common christian purpose, that it is noted as something remarkable, and pointed at with self complacent boasting. We have fashionable churches, and churches made attractive by music that costs enough to support christian teachers in a half a dozen barren districts, and enough of the exhibition of the worldly spirit to show to keenly observing outsiders that the christian spirit of self-sacrifice and the christian faith in the hereafter are not in us—are hardly in the best of us."

"We would not be harsh, but we ask in all candor, if there is not in every christian country enough in the aspect of christian people to make their religion seem a hollow pretence, a thing without vital power, a system not half believed by those who profess it." Does not the world find us quarreling about non-essential things, striving for a sectarian precedence and practically ignoring the fact that the world needs to be saved through simple faith in and following of Jesus Christ? Really, when the scientist and the naturalist come with their scalpels and crucibles and blow pipes, and tell us they will believe in nothing they cannot see and weigh and

measure, there is but little left for them to do. Whose fault is it that they find their work so easy? Why is it there is such a flutter when they speak, except that those who profess to be christians do not half believe in christianity, and have no rational comprehension of the basis of such belief as they profess?"

Two things must come before skepticism will be overthrown, viz.; 1st. A perfect willingness to go into an examination of christianity for the truths sake alone. Any man who is interested is a partisan, either for christianity or against it, is unfit for the investigation. So far as the claims of christianity are to be settled by investigation, they are to be settled by men whose supreme desire is to find the truth wherever it may lead or land them.

2d. Christianity must be better illustrated in life by those who profess it. When christians everywhere are controlled by a love that takes in God and every human being, and when "divine service" consists in the ministry to the poor and the suffering, and not of clothes and candles; when the christian name is greater than all sectarianisms and obliterates them all; when benevolence is law and humblest service in highest honor and life becomes divine, then skepticism will cease, and not till then."

(For The Truth Seeker.)

### PRIVILEGED CLASSES.

In the United States there is the enormous sum of three hundred and fifty-four millions, four hundred and eighty-three thousand, five hundred and eighty-one dollars (\$354,483,581), exempt from all kinds of taxes. This property belongs to but a modicum of our citizens. The general public has no interest in it, nor any control over it. It belongs to the class of privileged people, who assume to be better and holier than others, and who claim exemption from taxes on that account. They advance no other claim. Of this vast amount of property, not one cent comes back to a tax-ridden people, in the way of benefits, or otherwise. On the contrary, it is used entirely for the purpose of aggrandisement and permanent increase. There is no power to stop this frightful accumulation of untaxable property in the hands of privileged classes, except the voluntary uprising of an indignant populace.

And this property is so held, exempt from the tax that the poor widow pays, by virtue of unconstitutional law. No state has yet been so base as to say in direct terms that one class of its people should be taxed to support the rest, nor to exempt the rest from equal taxation. But the legislatures—taught by the obsolete ideas borrowed from a dead past—pass laws to tax one part of the people's property higher to make up for what they excuse these favored ones from paying.

Were legislatures to attempt to favor any particular occupation or trade, or class of property-holders—not in the name of religion—by exempting them from taxation, courts would decide such laws unconstitutional. The people, as a mass, would rise in their might and hurl such men from power. But when done in the interest of bigoted creeds—though in the minority—and a servile people acquiesce, and the thinking men of our land remain silent through cowardly fear of the opinion of a bigoted world.

\$354,483,581—over three and a-half hundreds of millions of idle property going scot free, while the poor widow's little poverty-stricken home is sold to pay for the sidewalk built before her door, along which each Sunday rustles the silk and broadcloth of the owners of the magnificent mansion next door, called the House of a Merciful God; along whose front the city, aided by this poor widow's hard-earned tax, have built a sidewalk free because it is privileged.

\$354,483,581 in 1870 exempt from the burdens of taxes, which a free people should share equally. But look at the frightful increase: In 1850, it was but \$87,328,801; now it is four times as great. Quadrupled in twenty years. Then, in 1890, it will be \$1,417,935,000, or fifteen hundred millions.

O, no, there is no danger of religious tyranny in our country (?)

But while the value of privileged property has increased four-fold in twenty years, the State-petted owners thereof have not doubled. So it was with slavery, at the last, but one seventy-fifth part of the southerners owned the accursed institution, and ruled the rest, black and white, with tyranny.

Should the numbers but again double in twenty years, and the property quadruple, just think of the body of purse-proud bigots exempt from tax, that would lord it over the unregenerate.

And yet just as soon as this article has been read or passed without reading, the thoughts will be forgotten, and no voice raised to warn, until the toils are too tightly drawn to be severed, except by the sword.

W. H. COUNTE.

WAVERLY, IOWA, Aug. 11th, 1873.

# THE TRUTH SEEKER;

D. M. BENNETT, EDITOR.  
PARIS, ILLINOIS.

## THE BIBLE—NO. 1

In view of the reverence and deep veneration felt by the majority of the people of Christian nations for the compilation called by this name, we approach the subject with some hesitation. We wish not to offend or wound the feelings of any sincere, though deluded persons whose regard for the book is so much greater than our own; but, believing it perfectly legitimate and proper to examine, so far as we are able, into its character, merits and truthfulness, as we would the ancient writings of Herodotus, Xenophon, Livy or Tacitus, we shall endeavor, in the observations we have to make, to exercise freedom, candor and honesty. We are told by the priests of the Jewish, the Romish, as well as the Protestant Church, that the Bible is the word of God—a direct emanation from Deity—not written exactly by His own hand, but dictated directly by Himself, and that every word is a positive revelation from heaven; that it was given us for our guide and instruction in all the devious events of life, and that we are not permitted to doubt it for a moment. This lesson was taught us in childhood; it was inculcated in the Sabbath school, from the pulpit, and upon every suitable occasion.

The effects of this early education are not easily erased, and we invariably cling to the idea that the Bible contains virtues, truths, morals and excellences vastly superior to what is found in any other, or all other books. This claim is positively asserted and insisted upon by the priests aforesaid; but we hold we are under no obligation to believe the assertion of any man, or any class of men, unless the same is supported by proof, or probabilities at least, convincing to the intelligent mind. In fact a rational person has no right to believe mere assertion, unsupported by proof or reason, though it may have been handed down as legend or tradition from generation to generation for thousands of years.

This subject is an extensive one, and we have considerable to say upon it—more than can be contained in one article of suitable length. We shall, therefore, make some preliminary remarks in this number, and recur again to the subject in future numbers.

It is very natural for superstitious persons and those of limited understanding to feel peculiar reverence for the events, the history, the motives and the claims of past ages. We hold, however, that any number of years cannot make true, that which was not originally true—An *assertion* is not *truth* any more for being five thousand years old than one hour. Truth must ever remain truth, and by no process and by no length of time can falsehood be converted into truth. Neither does it make any difference how many times an error is asserted, nor how many individuals repeat it—falsehood is falsehood still.

Is it right we should give credence to an impossibility or an improbability, simply because it is said to have occurred a long time ago? Certainly not. If a statement is made of a marvelous occurrence said to have transpired in our own day or time, we take the liberty to disbelieve it, unless backed up by proof or circumstantial evidence at least, and we have the same right to doubt similar unproved assertions handed down from former ages.

Should a person of modern times narrate to us how a man on a certain occasion had, simply by the exercise of his will, stopped the motion of the heavenly bodies, in other words caused "the sun and moon to stand still," making a certain day several hours longer than any before it or since, would we be likely to credit the statement? Would we

not declare it utterly impossible and totally unworthy the belief of any person? Suppose, then, he should say God had done it, would we still believe it? Would we not continue to withhold our assent from the assertion? If the statement were made of modern times, even though by a *priest*, we could not possibly believe it, and it is almost marvelous how easy it is for thousand to believe when the event is said (though we know not by whom) to have occurred some four thousand years ago. Is it really any more probable that such a feat was performed four thousand years ago than one year ago? And are we under any more obligation to believe it then than now?

If a man of our own age of the world should affirm that God appeared in person on a certain occasion, and co-habited with a certain young woman and produced an offspring, would we be likely to believe it? Suppose he should say a man had dreamed it, would we believe it any the sooner? Would we not declare the statement wholly improbable and unworthy of confidence? Would such an event be any more likely to occur two thousand years ago than now? Should he insist that the Almighty God of the Universe had actually entered the womb of that young woman; that He had remained there nine months (the period of gestation); that He had continued with the offspring through the years of infancy, childhood and youth, up to manhood—a period of thirty years—that this person was really and absolutely God—the Creator of the heavens and the earth—could we possibly believe it? Would we not declare at once that the statement was too absurd and ridiculous to be credited for a moment? But when the matter is said to have taken place nineteen hundred years ago, and there is nothing in the world to sustain the fable save the mere assertion of one or two individuals of whom little or nothing is known, is it not wonderful how many thousands implicitly believe it and base their hopes of salvation and happiness here and hereafter upon the bare assertion?

If God is not performing such feats now, is it more probable that He did it nineteen hundred years ago? Is He not "the same, yesterday, today and forever?"

Is it not vastly easier for sensible men to believe, and vastly more probable that the entire story is the product of the brain of some designing priest, than that such an occurrence ever had an existence in fact?

We can well understand that the information possessed by the ancients in regard to the laws of matter, the form and motion of the earth, the size and movement of the heavenly bodies, the sciences of chemistry, geology, astronomy, natural philosophy, mathematics and many other branches of knowledge, was sadly imperfect and deficient.

No one in this day would think of taking Noah, or Abraham, or Isaac, or Jacob, or Moses, or Aaron, or David, or Solomon even, as authorities upon these important subjects. We know they had very limited knowledge of this kind, and we look not to them for it, we turn at once to teachers of much later years. But when it comes to a knowledge of Deity—His character, His attributes, His occupation, His objects, His will, His purposes and wishes, we somehow give them the credit of knowing a vast amount—more by far than is known by all the learned and wise of modern centuries.

Is there any justice or reason in crediting them with this great amount of knowledge upon this intricate and uncertain subject, when they were so deficient of the truth upon almost all other subjects? Is it probable that they possessed full and complete information on this ground when they had so little upon all others? Decidedly not. They lived in a barbarous age. They had but little accurate information, as we have seen, upon any scientific subject and if we carefully analyze their notions and ideas of God—of His character and disposition—we find them equally as crude, imperfect and unreliable as their information upon the other subjects named—

no better in fact than that of barbarians and savages of later times, and equally unworthy our veneration and confidence.

The Deity they described has characteristics and qualities repugnant to the finer feelings of every intelligent human being. They represent Him as being fickle, changeable, malicious, unreasonable, revengeful and cruel; as delighting in wars, carnage and bloodshed—in the sufferings, terrors and torments of the helpless children of His own creation, as well as in the slaying and burning of dumb animals for His own pleasure and gratification. In short, they make Him out a monster rather than a loving, amiable and affectionate Father. Are we bound in duty, or justice, or reason, to take such crude and abhorrent notions of God for our guide, and are we under any obligations to adopt such views as our own, or must we believe infallible what such men teach us? No! a thousand times, no. It is our perfect right—a Divine right, in fact—for us to investigate for ourselves, to carefully weigh the evidence given; to compare statements with facts; to disregard what interested priests may assert; to search for truth in every direction, and to believe only that which seems to us right and compatible with divinely planted reason within our own breasts. We should not accept as truth such crude conceptions, such wild vagaries and repulsive representations. Is it not fully time such monstrosities were driven from the minds of men in this enlightened age of the world? Must we ever continue to believe that the class of men we have under consideration were the most fit and qualified to declare unto the world the mind and will of the Unknown God?

And if Deity was to engage in the business of book-making, and was under the necessity to employ human beings to perform the work for Him, would He be likely to delegate that class of men to do His work? Is not rather the idea of the Creator and Ruler of the universe writing a book, or employing men to write it for Him—the same subject to the many imperfections of human beings, to the whims and fancies of those engaged in the work; to the changes and fallibilities of human language; the errors of copying, translation and interpretation—is not the whole idea more in keeping with the darkness and ignorance of past ages than with the enlightened intelligence of later years?

In reviewing the history of ancient nations we find it not the Jewish nation alone that engaged in the business of getting up Gods and Bibles. There were many other Deities besides Jehovah, and many other books or writings termed sacred, besides the Jewish Bible, and many of them more ancient and equal at least to the Jewish Scriptures in beauty of composition, probability of statement and purity of morals. The Egyptians had their gods and their sacred writings; the Assyrians had theirs; the Phœnicians theirs; the Hindoos theirs, with the Vedas of inspired and Divine commands and injunctions. The Persians had theirs, with the Shaster for their infallible guide; the Chinese had theirs; the Arabians theirs; the Grecians had their gods and their oracles and divine instructions; the Romans, the Gauls, the Britons, the Scandinavians, the Ancient Germans theirs. In short, nearly all the ancient nations had their separate gods, their sacred writings, their prophets, their theology, their priests and their divine commands.

Who can now show that the others were all wrong and the Jews alone right? Are the children of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob found to be better people, more peaceful and lamb-like than other nations? Were they more studious in the pursuit of heavenly wisdom, and are we bound to believe that their sacred writings embody all that is divine and heavenly? On the other hand, the Shaster, the Vedas, the Pymandir, the Koran and the sacred writings of other nations are equal in point of excellence, virtue and beauty to the Bible, and contain not as much of wars and bloodshed, whoredom and adultery.

It is, however, held by the Christian world that

with the exception of the Jews, these nations were all wrong, their religion paganism, and their ideas of God totally fallacious. We reject in toto their theology and their claims of inspiration in their sacred writings. Had we nevertheless adopted either of their systems of theology, and taken their sacred writings as our infallible guide, we would in all probability have felt the same reverence for Buddha, Brahma, Osiris, Fot, Yahoo, Odin, Jupiter or Allah, as the case might be, as we now do for Jehovah;—we would have felt the same veneration for the oracles and commands of those deities, as we now do for that of the Jews, and would doubtless have bowed in the same reverential submission to Zoroaster, Christna, Confucius or Mahomet that we now accord to Abraham, Moses, David or Jesus. The Jewish theology, we again assert, lacks as much of being the oldest in the world as it does of being the purest, the most beautiful and the best. Pagan nations, so called, with their theology and systems of religion, existed a long time before the Jews were a nation and before Moses established their system of theology. He was educated in Egyptian schools, was versed in their religious sects, as well as that of other nations, but that he made an improvement upon theirs in the one he devised, who can establish?

Instead of the compilation of incoherent matter called the Bible, is it not vastly more reasonable, and probable that the book which God has given to his creatures is the great volume of nature—the countless worlds of the universe—the sphere which we ourselves inhabit; the mountains, the rocks, the plains, the ocean, the rivers with the innumerable phases of animal and vegetable life, which fill the earth, together with the gases and invisible fluids; the subtle and unseen powers and forces which permeate and keep in perpetual motion the whole universe of matter? This volume is always spread open before us for our study and admiration. It is susceptible of being understood and admired; it requires no numerous classes of priests to interpret and explain it; it is not hid from some and revealed to others; it is not contradictory and inconsistent; it is nothing that designing men can change or destroy; it represents not Deity as being changeable, malicious or cruel, but ever speaks the same beautiful, loving and harmonious language to all nations and in all times.

Let us study and revere this volume—let us contemplate its countless wonders and beauties; let us gain more and more knowledge in reference to it; let us give it our ceaseless attention and admiration, rather than to that imperfect book which men have written, which contains grave errors and contradictions, faulty descriptions of the carnage and bloodshed of nations; the intrigues and baseness of kings; the generations of families; the commonplace events of cities and villages; the crimes, cruelties and injustice of individuals, and all this upon the dicta of an interested and designing priesthood, who have ever aimed to keep their fellow men under their power, and have always lived upon the labors of those they seek to control. They claim to know more of God than other men; to have more influence at His court, and to be able to instruct their dependents as to the will and designs of the Universal Father. They wield the rod of tyranny over the heads of their obsequious dupes, assuring them that it is the will of Heaven that this state of things should ever continue. For the services they render—for doing the thinking for the masses, for appealing to Heaven in their behalf, and revealing to them what the will of Heaven is, the priesthood claim the right to the fat of the land; the best of the flocks; the veneration and obedience of those whom they rule over;—with perfect immunity from physical labor and toil. Is this always to continue? Is man always to be led and controlled by such guides? We think not. The day is dawning, light is breaking and the glorious sun of truth is casting his rays abroad. His glories

will eventually spread over the whole earth, and light and knowledge will be perfectly free to every human beings. The time is not in the far distant future when man can think for himself; when he can have such views of Deity as to him seems reasonable and consistent; when he will not need priests or “go betweens” to tell him what the will of God is, and to pray to God for Him to attend to his spiritual affairs generally. Man is fast learning to do his own thinking and his own praying, and the officious labors of the priesthood, which originated in, and rightfully belongs to the dark ages of the past, are fast becoming useless and unnecessary.

As before observed, we will reserve further remarks upon the Bible, including examinations into the reputed writers and character of the different parts for future articles.

### MORAL COURAGE.—“Back Bone.”

It is to be regretted there are so many persons of liberal tendencies and liberal views that lack the independence to openly avow their sentiments—that are “afraid to speak out aloud” and let all around them know what they think and what they believe. It is seldom we meet a Catholic, a Presbyterian, a Methodist or a Mormon that is reluctant to admit what he believes and to what sect he belongs. Why should Liberals be any more backward in this respect? Is it because our views are *unpopular*? That is not a valid reason. We should not be ashamed to avow our honest sentiments whether those around us approve them or not; besides Liberalism is no longer as unpopular as in former time. There are hundreds of thousands and millions in our land who have embraced it and ceased to longer give their assent to the dogmas, creeds and absurdities which have for centuries been taught and enforced by a designing and arbitrary priesthood; and the way for us to make the TRUTH we have more popular, is for every one who has found it to avow it freely and without restraint. It is not necessary we should obtrude our views upon unwilling ears or at improper times and places, but we should not be ashamed to let it be understood we have abandoned the errors and follies of the past and are free. There are no grounds for shame; the ablest scientific minds of the day are with us; the original and independent thinkers are of our faith; some of the soundest statesmen and purest patriots of the present and the past hold to the views we do, and truth and right is our side. Our ranks are constantly increasing and in a few years, comparatively, we will be as numerous as the followers and supporters of priestcraft.

Then let us hold up our heads—let us have “back bone”—let us not be ashamed to avow the truth we have found, nor to let our light shine into dark places. Let us interest ourselves in the enlightenment of others; let us call the attention of enquiring minds to the arguments of reason in liberal publications; let us circulate the organs of free thought. Let us be zealous and active in the work and in due time our ranks will be greatly enlarged—the army of free men and free women will be vastly increased, until finally truth will everywhere prevail, and the great preponderance of the world will be liberal.

HOW TO HELP THE TRUTH SEEKER.—Let every liberal thinking person whose eyes may see these pages subscribe for it at once and induce as many others as possible to do the same. What is the paltry sum of fifty cents that any one should begrudge it for a paper like THE TRUTH SEEKER a year?

We are compelled for want of room to omit some communications from our contributors, as well as several articles we had prepared ourselves, till next number. We hope the friends of our cause will “hurry up” and increase our subscription list so as to justify us in enlarging the size of our sheet or in changing it to a weekly.

JUST RECEIVED.—An able, argumentative pamphlet of 23 pages, written by A. J. Grover, Earlville Illinois, entitled “The Bible Argument Against Woman Stated and Answered.” It possesses unusual interest.

HULL'S CRUCIBLE.—No. 1, of the new issue is before us; while we dissent from the Editor's views on the social question and varied and sexual intercourse—believing that the ties of home, husband and wife, parents and children are the most sacred known to the human heart and should be held inviolate—we must accord to the Messrs. Hull marked ability, honesty and earnestness. Those who wish to read their views upon Social Ethics and Spiritualism should subscribe for their weekly—Terms \$2.50 per year. Address Hull Brothers, 27 Milford street, Boston, Mass.

[For the Truth Seeker.]

To Rev. R. D. Van Duresen:

In your reply to “A Liberal Thinker,” you say, “when God made the law he did not make it so strong that He could not break it. I am very anxious to know how you found this out, for if it is true, you must be able to show what law has been broken or changed, and for what purpose; for it is clear, if He has broken or changed any law, it has been done to correct a mistake, or to please a man, a Priest for instance. This would abrogate entirely his infinite wisdom, and lower him to the character of a human being, finite and full of error.”

“If God made our bodies, when they are broken he is the one to mend them; and it is reasonable that we should call on him to mend them.”

Yes, “if God made,” is well put in, but does not this argument look small and contemptible? You talk of God, an infinite power, with as much flippancy as I would of horse or dog, and you set yourself up as judge of his capacity, and affirm his ability, with a coareness that is truly astonishing. Your conception of a God is less refined than the savages of our forests, for they, with all their rudeness, respect him enough not to compare him to a mere mechanic, but call him a spirit. A missionary from these savages would teach you something.

You speak of praying to God; suppose we look into this point a little. What do you mean when you say God? Have you ever considered this point? You are aware, no doubt, there are many ideas on this subject, but what I wish to know is, what is your idea, or conception of this maker—God. Until I get at your conception I shall avail myself of the general view of G-o-d. First, then, are the letters; next, is the object to which the letters apply; and let me ask—is it a man, woman or monkey? For some idea you must have, or else you are only thinking of the letters, g-o-d, and your prayers are directed to those letters. But to make a long argument short, and to show some charity for your language, we will take the conception of God, as presented by the best of painters of the world, and that is the paintings representing him in many of the Churches of Europe, and some in this country. God, in these paintings, is represented as a venerable old man, with long white hair and beard, and a ruddy face beaming with health and benevolence. We have here a representation of the highest conception that man has yet conceived of God. Is this your conception? We feel safe in saying we think that it is; if not please give your own.

Now this conception of God is a picture in the brain of a venerable old man. This is man's highest conception, beyond he cannot go. If to this image you talk, to this image you pray, it is the creator of the Universe, your God. You thus see that you, as well as all christians, talk of and pray to an image of a venerable old man in brain, and what are you but image worshipers? Wherein are you superior to those ignorant, deluded and superstitious savages that rave in Africa, bowing and bending to snakes, toads, and to their own shadows?

L. T. W., Carondelet, Mo.

[From the Beacon of June 13th.]

## DISCUSSION ON PRAYER, ETC.

CONTINUED FROM LAST NUMBER.

BY REV. WM. HOLT, OF THE PARIS CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

## Efficacy of Prayer, Etc.

EDITOR BEACON:—I have read the articles which appeared upon the above-named subject—one from Rev. Mr. Van Deursen, two from "A Liberal Thinker," or "Sunshine," and last, but not least, one from D. B. Mortimer, "A Liberal Thinker" also, no doubt.

I deem it not only "liberal thinking," but general looseness, the way those last named gentlemen handle the solemn ordinances of God's house, and what seems still worse for those "liberal thinkers," though claiming morality and common courtesy, is to hear them impeach the motives of those who regard prayer as a Christian duty and a great privilege. For D. B. M. does no less than this when he speaks of "those whose occupation is to pray for others." But he says "the reverend gentleman (Van Deursen) does not go as far as the Catholic clergy do," etc. Of course not. The Bible does not sanction the conduct of the Catholic clergy.

But, Doctor, when you set aside the Bible as God's revealed will, and assume the ground of a mere Fatalist, by what authority do you find fault with any of us? We are just what the doctrine of Fatalism has made us, therefore you should not scribble another line against us or our long prayers.

We are much encouraged to know that even the skeptic concedes the fact that "Moses and St. Luke were very eminent and good men in their time, and possibly knew as much of the efficacy of prayer as is known now," etc.

We would be truly ungrateful were we not to feel ourselves under some obligations to D. B. M. for this important concession. Important, because if they were "eminent and good men" they were not likely to be deceived, neither would they try to deceive others. Then, of course, they wrote the portions of the Bible attributed to them. St. Luke says that Moses was a prophet, and testified of a coming prophet—Christ—whom you should hear in all things, "and it shall come to pass that every soul who will not hear that Prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people," etc. See Acts 3, 22.

But D. B. M. says "they lived a long time ago, in the dim, dark ages of the past," etc. Doubtless it does seem dark to his vision. Why not? The past, present and future all seem dark to the skeptic.

But just here I am reminded that "Sunshine" informs us "that if science is the essence of facts and proves anything, it proves beyond a doubt that man still lives beyond the grave," etc. We are anxious to know by what particular theory of science "Sunshine" would undertake to prove "that man still lives beyond the grave."

Let us, therefore, have your theory, sir, and then the proof. But then he does not speak positively, and this is the style of the skeptic generally.

D. B. M. informs us that he lived for many years a devout and prayerful life. But after reviewing his life he could not see that he had effected much by his prayers, and to-day he is unable to call to mind a single instance in which his prayers had the slightest effect in changing the Diet, etc. This is truly remarkable. What sensible man ever thought of "changing the mind of God?" But he could not see that his prayers had effected anything? I do not wonder at the failure. You were walking "by sight," and at the same time could not see. But the Christian walks "by faith." See 2 Cor., 5, 7. In this, Mr. Editor, we see the grand secret of their failure and skepticism.

This vast and boundless universe, with everything of which we can conceive, had its origin in miracle; the predictions of the ancient prophets, the teachings of Jesus Christ and his Apostles, were confirmed by miracles. Hence, says St. Paul: "God also bearing them witness with signs and wonders and divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his will." Heb. 2, 4.

God did not then have to change his will to work miracles, for the confirmation of the truths or revelation, for Paul says it was according to his will. It was also his will that those miracles which were given for a special purpose should cease, as soon as that purpose was accomplished. See 1 Cor., 13 Ch.

Therefore, Prof. Tyndal's objections to the Bible with all the little skeptics who are following in the wake, are based upon their ignorance of the Bible and its teachings.

But why pray unless God will answer by signs from Heaven? Because God has commanded it. How can we know that our prayers are heard without a sign? I answer, 1st, know that you are a

proper subject for prayer; 2d, how to pray, or what you may properly pray for. When this rule is observed, how may I know that God hears my prayer? I answer, 3d, because he has promised to hear such. How, then, do I know that my prayers are answered? 4th, by an implicit confidence in the goodness and promises of God. 1 John 5, 14, 15.

But will I feel better after such prayer is offered? Yes, but your good feelings will arise from, and be the result of, your faith in the goodness and promises of God, and not your faith the result of your feeling, as is thought by many.

It would be gratifying to many of us, who still hold to the good old way, if those liberal-minded gentlemen would inform us as to their faith. They, of course, do not believe in Christianity as taught by Christ and his Apostles. It may be that they simply believe in all unbelief.

Do they believe in Spiritualism, Naturalism, Pantheism or Atheism? Will they say which? If not there can be nothing learned from them.

We believe in Christ; and when D. B. M. informs us of his failure to continue in the faith, he only confirms what the inspired Apostle said would come to pass, that "men would turn away from the truth and give heed to seducing spirits," etc. 1 Tim., 4 Ch.

There is, Mr. Editor, in reality but one question to be answered in order to know where these very liberal-minded gentlemen stand, viz: Is Christianity a Divine Institution? Will they say yes, or will they continue in the dark and thereby fulfill the words of Jesus?

"Men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil." WM. HOLT.

(From the Gazette of July 2d.)

## REPLY TO REV. WM. HOLT.

EDITOR GAZETTE:—In the *Beacon and Blade*, of June 13th, I noticed the reply of Rev. Wm. Holt to an article of mine on the efficacy of prayer, which appeared in your paper of June 4th, and, desiring to respond to it and have it appear in the *Beacon*, I asked friend Moore if he would publish a rejoinder if I would write one. He said yes, but, upon handing it to him, it did not seem to comport with his views of fairness to let both sides be heard in his paper, and he refused my article. Will you be kind enough to insert it in the *Gazette*?

From the position occupied by the reverend gentleman I looked for some argument, and for some new light upon the subject, or some results he had himself accomplished in the line of prayer, but I fail to see anything of the kind. I cannot perceive that he controverts any position I took, or really adds anything to what has already been said. He quotes several passages of Scripture, which may be supposed to exhibit ability and research, and answer the purpose when arguments are not at hand. Some years ago, I knew a strolling, crazy woman (who, in early life, had been crossed in love) who, I think, could all day long quote two passages of Scripture to the reverend gentleman's one, and with equal aptness and flippancy, to say the least. If any one offended her or opposed her, she would hurl at them such a perfect torrent of Scripture quotations as would nearly make one's head swim. By the by, almost anything can be proved by detached passages from the Bible. There is hardly a crime, such as murder, robbery, rapine, theft, lying, etc., but what can be justified by it, and as to matters of belief, are not all the possible shades of opinion and doctrine, upon the various theological subjects, however antagonistical and contradictory, positively proved by the Bible? It was said, many years ago, by a quaint individual, that "the Bible is much like a fiddle—any tune can be played upon it you please."

The Rev. Mr. Holt seems to be shocked with the "general looseness with which I handle the ordinances of God's house," and speak of the occupation of the clergy being in part to pray for others. "God's house," it strikes me, is rather an extensive institution, and there are a great number of us who claim an interest in it equal to that of himself or any other individual. He does not clearly state what he means by the "solemn ordinances," but probably prayer is one. I did not know but what it was perfectly legitimate and proper for any one to speak of it who chose to. As to the occupation of the clergy, is it not really as much an occupation as any business that is pursued for a livelihood? Do not young men prepare for it and engage in it as a means of securing their "bread and butter," as really as in the practice of law or medicine, or any commercial or mechanical pursuit? Are not their services offered in the market to the highest bidders as really as those following other avocations? Is not preaching and praying really a trade as much as shoemaking or blacksmithing? For salaries running from \$1,000 and \$2,000 to \$10,000 & \$20,000 per year, it seems one can well afford to

preach a good many sermons and make a great number of prayers, and get their living much easier at that, than is done at tilling the soil, for instance. Does the gentleman say that it is not for money that he preaches and prays? If the pay was to be stopped, would not the preaching and praying stop also? And I submit it to the gentleman in all sincerity, that if that should be the case with him, would he not return to the honest business of following the plow, or some other means of making a living? It strikes me the world has had too many hundreds of thousands of priests, of all classes and kinds, that we, in the 19th century, should be afraid to speak of their occupation with the same freedom as that of others.

I believe I have the same respect for a good clergyman that I have for any other man; but for a mere pretender or hypocrite, or one guilty of immoral practices, I entertain no more respect than for any other men pursuing that kind of course. I have been acquainted with many clergymen in my time, who were in every way excellent and worthy gentlemen; but I regret we have so many painful evidences throughout the country, of "black sheep" among them.

To show my respect for worthy members of the clergy, as well as to further elucidate the subject of the efficacy of prayer, I will here quote what some of them have said upon the subject, and which appears to me to be reasonable and consistent. In a sermon on prayer by the Rev. William Leechman, D. D., Principal and Professor of Divinity in the college of Glasgow (strictly orthodox), the following passages occur: "It is urged, since God is infinite in goodness, he is always disposed to bestow on his creatures whatever is proper for them, and since he is infinite in wisdom, he will always choose the fittest time and best manner of bestowing it. To what purpose then do we entreat him to do what he certainly will do without any solicitation or importunity?" "It is not the design of prayer to give information to our Creator of things he was unacquainted with before; so neither is it the design of it to move His affections, as good speakers move the hearts of their hearers by the pathetic arts of oratory nor to raise his pity as beggars, by their importunities and tears, work upon the compassion of by-standers. God is not subject to the sudden passions and emotions we feel, nor to any change of his measures and conduct by their influence; He is not wrought upon and changed by our prayers, for 'with him there is no variableness or shadow of turning.'"

Dr. Blair, a Scotch divine, also of an orthodox church, gave utterance to similar views in his sermon on the "Unchangeableness of the Divine Nature," as follows: "To what purpose, it may be urged, is homage addressed to a Being whose purpose is unalterably fixed; to whom our righteousness extendeth not; whom by no arguments we can persuade, and by no supplications we can modify? The objection would have weght if, in our religious addresses, we design to work any alteration on God, either by giving him information of what he did not know, or by exciting affections He did not possess; or by inducing Him to change measures which he had previously formed. But they are only crude and imperfect notions of religion which can suggest such ideas. The change which our devotions are intended to make is upon ourselves and NOT UPON THE ALMIGHTY."

The same views are inculcated by the philosopher, Dr. Kames, thus: "The Being that made the world governs it by the laws that are inflexible, because they are the best; and to imagine that He can be moved by prayers, oblations or sacrifices to vary His plan of government, is an impious thought—degrading the Deity to a level with ourselves."

These remarks strike me as being much sounder and more reasonable than Mr. Holt's talk about miracles, indicating that they are the result of prayer.

The reverend gentleman appears to derive a great amount of satisfaction from my remark that Moses and Luke may have been very eminent and good men in their time; but I fear I will have to lessen his pleasure somewhat by some modification I have to make of that remark. Moses was, perhaps, eminent as a law-giver (such laws as they were), and eminent as a leader of a stubborn, warlike and rapacious people. He was eminent as a cruel tyrant, plunderer, robber and murderer, which is fully set forth in the 31st chapter of Numbers, wherein is narrated his sending out 12,000 warriors of the Israelites to rob, despoil and put to death a neighboring nation—the Midianites—a quiet, peaceable people, devoted to the pursuits of agriculture and stock raising. It states that the five kings of Midian and all the men were put to death, and the women and children captured, together with 675,000 sheep, 72,000 beef cattle, 61,000 asses, with several hundred shekels of gold, besides jewels and other valuables. All these the despoilers



took back with them to their camp, but Moses was very angry with the officers and captains of the hosts, and said: "Have you saved all the women alive?" "Kill every male among the little ones, and every woman that hath known man by lying with him; but all the women children that have not known a man by lying with him, keep for yourselves."

32,000 virgins, in pursuance to these orders of Moses, were kept and divided out pro rata among the different tribes, and for purposes easily understood. The others—women and children—probably as many as 50,000 helpless and defenseless beings, were inhumanly put to death. Was anything more monstrous, fiendish, cruel and blood-thirsty ever perpetrated by Nero or Caligula, of Rome—by the Apaches of Arizona, or by Captain Jack and the Modocs of the Lava Beds? That Moses also committed murder in cold blood—see Exodus ii, 13—when he killed an Egyptian and buried him in the sand.

We know nothing against Luke, and only that two books in the New Testament are attributed to him, though he nowhere claims that he wrote them by inspiration. But at the Council of Catholic Bishops, Prelates and Priests, held at Nice, some three hundred and twenty-five years after Christ, which decided by vote what books should and what books should not be admitted into the collection of the writings of various persons, known and unknown, called the Bible. Luke's book was admitted by the merest squeeze, having a majority of a single vote. That was much closer than John Logan's majority in our late city election. Had Luke fallen short that one vote, Mr. Holt's reverence for the saint's writings, as well as that of thousands of his Christian friends, would doubtless have been much less than now. What a difference one vote sometimes makes!

The reverend gentleman talks about we "small skeptics," "followers of Tyndall," etc. We are perhaps hardly worthy to be called followers of so able and learned a man, but we are small enough, doubtless. How is it with the clergy? Are any of them small in caliber and moral strength; or are they all great? How is it, Mr. Holt?

I do not precisely understand what the gentleman means when he speaks of my assuming the ground of a mere fatalist. I am no fatalist, nor do I believe in the government of fate as I understand the term; but in a system of unerring and unchangeable laws established by the Ruler of the universe.

The gentleman's logic is rather amusing, thus: "If they (Moses and Luke) were eminent and good men they were not likely to be deceived, neither would they try to deceive others. Then, of course, they wrote the portions of the Bible attributed to them." Is not that a happy way of jumping at conclusions? Anything can be proved by such logic?

The gentleman asks for my views and belief. I would be happy to enlighten him, but I fear this article has already reached such limits as to preclude my doing so at much length at this time. Suffice it now to say that I am a lover of truth and an admirer of the beautiful. I believe in the existence of a Supreme Power, which exists in and controls not only this world, but the countless millions of other worlds with which space is filled; but I do not believe the Jewish idea of God being a fickle, changeable, cruel and malicious person, to be the correct one, nor do I feel obligated to make their odious system of theology mine. Whether Deity is an impersonal principle and power, which pervades the entire universe alike, and is in the most distant star, a thousand million times farther away than the sun, just as much as here, or whether He is a person, having a head, a face, body, arms and legs, with passions and impulses as we have, sitting upon a throne and occupying a single point in the heavens; or whether He is a monster with smoke issuing from His nostrils, fire and a two-edged sword from His mouth, flames from His eyes, horns from His hands, etc., as described in the Bible, it is probable Mr. Holt and I will never be able to positively establish.

I believe our duty in this life is confined principally to ourselves and to our fellow beings. God is so far beyond our knowledge and comprehension that we can neither injure Him by our bad conduct or benefit Him by our adoration, prayer or advice; but we can, by our actions, greatly injure or benefit ourselves and our fellow mortals. The greatest good we can accomplish while passing through life, I believe, is to do wrong to no man, and to do all in our power to make our fellow creatures happy.

From the account we have of Jesus, I believe Him to have been an excellent personage, actuated by the best motives and philanthropic intentions, though not possessed of such scientific knowledge as is now in the world and embraced in the studies of geology, astronomy, chemistry, natural philosophy and other similar sciences; nor do I believe Him to be the Creator and Ruler of the universe.

I regard the hundreds of different forms of relig-

ion, with which the earth has been filled, as all of human origin, most of them containing much that is good, as well as a great deal that is absurd and ridiculous. I regard Christianity as no exception to the rule, and that while it contains much that is commendable, it abounds in absurdities and errors, and is chiefly made up of dogmas, borrowed and adopted from pre-existent systems of theology.

While it may, perhaps, be justly claimed that it contains more that is good than any previous system of religion, truth compels me to state that it also contains more that has proved harmful and injurious to the human race. More lives have been taken, more blood has been shed, more intolerance has been exercised in its name than in all the other systems of religion put together.

I would freely state my belief much further if it would gratify the gentleman, but it is not proper in this article to go more at length. Should he wish to discuss with me, in the public papers, either of the points touched upon, or others arising out of them, I am at his service.

In the winding-up quotation of his article, the reverend gentleman has the courtesy to represent that my skepticism and unbelief, as well as that of others, arises from bad conduct, or, in other words, that we "choose darkness rather than light, because our deeds are evil." It may be entirely called for, and in good taste for the gentleman to make this insinuation, but it hardly appears so to me. I trust, however, my past and present life, for one, will compare not unfavorably with his. I take pleasure in assuring him I have endeavored to lead a useful life. I have intended to be guilty of as few wrongs as possible. I am glad I am able to say I have never murdered; I have never robbed; I have aimed not to bear false witness. I have associated with the upright and moral portions of society. I have not been a drunkard or a debauchee. I have not been the companion of roughs and gamblers, and never whipped a defenseless woman with a plow line.

Some other points of the gentleman's article I would like to notice, but I have doubtless already said enough.

D. B. MORTIMER

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

The November number will contain Rev. Mr. Holt's reply and Mortimer's rejoinder.

For the Truth Seeker.

### "COMMON CAUSE."

MESSRS. PUBLISHERS:—Long may your little banner float in the breeze of universal emancipation from physical and mental bondage, and meet with the magnificent success you so richly deserve to encourage you onward in the good work you have so propitiously commenced.

Our cause has been sorely in need of more active members, who are animated by the right sort of spirit in their beneficent endeavors to liberate priest-ridden mankind from the pernicious influence their subtle oppressors wield over them.

We infidels to priestcraft are, as a class, not as "go-aheadative" in helping others out of the mire of superstition, from which our own efforts have freed us, as an ordinary solicitude for our less favorably situated brethren might dictate; when, therefore, a few bold and determined men propose to lead the van of liberators in their laudable enterprise, they meet the approval of all well-wishers of humanity, and deserve to be sustained by more substantial tokens than mere words of cheer. The vigorous tone of your sprightly little sheet indicates that you have entered upon the campaign against mental thralldom with an earnest determination to "lay low" the hydra-headed excrement of ignorance, supernaturalism, surreptitiously called Religion, begot and fostered by avarice and credulity, evincing an intention of making no concessions to any phase of it, even if, for want of aggressive power, certain "isms" are classed as amongst "Liberals." The extent of your facilities may be rather limited as yet, but they are not so small that they "mayn't" grow. Thousands of eager hearts are willing to "rally round the flag" of a brave leader, only waiting for the right sort of a watchword to furnish the requisites wherewith to open your broadsides (weekly, we hope, soon), pouring grape and canister into the heterogeneous hordes of supernaturalism; your ranks would soon fill with accessions from the multitude of unorganized enemies of priestly dominion and intolerance. What flag of Infidelity you intend to unfurl after having gained a substantial footing in the regards of all freethinkers, remains as yet hidden in the womb of time. I, for my part, am a radical advocate of materialism, who is willing to "fight it out on this line" till either it, or its antipode, supernaturalism, is placed "hors du combat," being enthusiastic in the belief that the former, which is only another name for the revelations of science, embraces all the

truths we are in search of. This asseveration I, of course, don't ask any one to accept until properly demonstrated, which I believe I can do. I am not given to dogmatizing, and hope none of your correspondents will sustain what may not be substantiated either by reason or facts. I am not so ultra that I would not gladly weigh all the cons which may be produced against what I conceive to be as immutable as the perennial truths of the universe. To hear all sides without prejudice, is the only true mode of disclosing the various merits and demerits of individual beliefs; thus, alone, are we enabled to cull the sweet from the bitter, and "hang on" to that which is good. While I would heartily desire the co-operation of all liberal-minded classes to thwart the encroachments of Christianity, I cannot sustain the policy advocated by the leading infidel paper of this country, to make "common cause" with the "furthest remove" of our antipodes in doctrine Spiritualism. The chasm of disparity is too great to admit of it being bridged over by any engineering feat within the sphere of mortal; therefore, I should think, each extreme would desire to "paddle its own canoe." Friction would invariably ensue, except one or the other opposites of the unnatural liaison were willing to close down on the propagation of their antagonistic principles. But as no conscious spiritualist nor straight materialist would sell his birth right for a mess of pottage, I don't see how the proposed (mess) alliance is at all feasible. To league with a young lithe and vigorous opponent in order to "dispatch" a decrepid and well nigh extinct relic of barbaric ages is rather a strange proceeding and may ultimately in leaving on the hands of materialism a vastly more powerful enemy than the one they have jointly overcome. The advantages accruing from such a proposition are therefore not transparent to my turbid perceptibilities, but I doubt whether there are many materialists who don't regard the proposed move of the investigator as rather quaint. Principle above all is my motto, and ought to be of every conscientious believer whatever his creed. Begging to be excused for having trespassed on your kind indulgence and limited space, I reiterate my best wishes for your future success.

Yours, truly,

HERMAN WETTSTEIN.

Harvard, Ills., Sept. 15, 1873.

(For the Truth Seeker.)

### HEAVEN ON EARTH.

The parson may preach and the fanatic rave,  
Of existence eternal beyond the dark grave;  
Their heaven, they say, is far up above,  
But mine is on earth, and I call it love!

The love of a parent, the love of a child,  
Who with fond caressings has hours beguiled;  
The love of a homestead free from all care,  
With dear ones around me—my heaven is there!

The love of a brother!—and hourly strive  
With heart and with hand to help him to thrive;  
To say to the hungry—My dinner is thine;  
To make others happy, that heaven is mine.

If we acted as conscience dictated our course,  
There'd be no occasion for grief or remorse;  
If we judged not by GOLD, but by a man's WORTH,  
Then indeed we should find a heaven on earth!

T. L. B., Binghamton, N. Y.

[For The Truth Seeker.]

### WHY?

Is it right to sell the shanty of the the widow or poor man for taxes, and exempt the respectable and wealthy churches together with \$1500 worth of property for each pious minister? Will some one of them so loyal to Christ's teachings tell us where He has taught such injustice practiced on the poor? Can a true man worship and obey a true God in such a church while a poor family may be moving their only bed, table, chair and teacup out of their tax-doomed, humble home? We prefer to drink water and eat salt and cold potatoes with the unfortunate poor by the road side, than drink wine and eat bread in such "respectable" christian churches. As for each Christian sect,

"Each class, self-pure, condemns the rest;  
Enlightened minds the whole detest.  
In strongest faith no virtue lies,  
And unbeliever no vice implies;  
A bare opinion hurts no man,  
Then prove it hurts a God who can;  
To others do, to others give,  
As you'd have done, or would receive."

T. L. BROWN.

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We extend the right hand of fellowship to liberal minds of all grades and classes. We ask them not to adopt our special views and opinions—to see with our eyes or to understand with our reason. We are not "hide-bound," nor do we ask others to "measure their wheat in our half bushel." We embrace, as in one brotherhood, Liberals, Free Religionists, Rationalists, Spiritualists, Universalists, Unitarians, Friends, Infidels, Free Thinkers, and in short all who dare to think and judge for themselves. Let us compare our views; let us canvass each other's opinions and reasons, and see which has the better way. We have no creed or dogmas to ask others to subscribe to, but are in favor of independent thought, free enquiry, free speech, and everything that tends to break the chains of mental bondage, ignorance and superstition. As it is not possible or desirable that all persons should think exactly alike, we do not expect to bring others to our standard of thought.

We wish not needlessly to wound the feelings of any, but hold to speaking frankly what we honestly believe to be true. We are not in favor of a "milk and water" diet for men and women, but something more positive and substantial. We are firmly opposed to priestcraft, the errors, superstitions and false creeds of past dark ages, and in favor of truth and progress.

## DEMANDS OF LIBERALISM.

The following nine propositions by Francis E. Abbot, of *The Index*, we endorse most cordially, and they are approved by liberal minds all over the country:

1. We demand that churches and other ecclesiastical property shall no longer be exempt from taxation.
2. We demand that the employment of chaplains in congress, in state legislatures, in the army and navy, and in prisons, asylums, and all other institutions supported by public money, shall be discontinued.
3. We demand that all public appropriations for sectarian, educational and charitable institutions shall cease.
4. We demand that all religious services now sustained by the government be abolished; and especially that the use of the Bible in public schools, whether ostensibly as a text-book or avowedly as a book of religious worship, shall be prohibited.
5. We demand the appointment, by the President of the United States or by the governors of the various states, of all religious festivals or fasts shall wholly cease.
6. We demand that the judicial oath in the courts and all other departments of the government shall be abolished, and that simple affirmation, under the pains and penalties of perjury, shall be established in its stead.
7. We demand that all laws directly or indirectly enforcing the observance of Sunday as the Sabbath shall be repealed.
8. We demand that all laws looking to the enforcement of "Christian" morality shall be abrogated and that all laws shall be conformed to the requirements of natural morality, equal rights and impartial liberty.
9. We demand that not only in the constitution of the United States and of the several states, but also in the practical administration of the same, no privilege or advantage shall be conceded to Christianity or any other special religion; that our entire political system shall be founded and administered on a purely secular basis, and whatever changes shall prove necessary to this end shall be consistently, unflinchingly and promptly made.

THERE are many hundreds of towns and villages in the country where *THE TRUTH SEEKER* has not yet been sent, simply because we had not the name of any liberal friend residing therein. We will always be obliged to friends who will send us the names of liberal people everywhere, that we may send them sample copies.

## APOLOGETIC.

We regret exceedingly several typographical errors which occurred in the last issue of *THE TRUTH SEEKER*. We will state to our friends that the paper is not printed in Paris, as our printing offices here have not type enough of this size to make up the paper, and have no steam power press upon which to do the printing. We have the paper printed in Terre Haute, Ind. Being a little late in getting out our last number, it was hurried off a little too much. We did not see a copy after it was ready for the press, and trusted too much to the printers, and unfortunately they neglected to look it over carefully and correct the errors. If our friends will overlook the matter this time we will be careful that a similar state of things does not occur again.

There were several minor errors that the reader could easily correct, but there were some quite egregious and inexcusable. In the article, *To The Friends of Free Thought*, on the first page, middle column, three inches from the foot, was a serious transposition of matter which made utter nonsense of the whole thing, and wholly obscured what we had to say.

Instead of the jumble as printed, we intended it to read thus: "We have about come to the conclusion that liberals, after all—are not liberal; and we are at a loss whether to attribute it to APATHY OR PENURIOSUSNESS."

We are unwilling to think it is the latter. In view of the generosity with which members of Orthodox Churches contribute sums of money from \$25 to \$500, and often more, towards the building of a Church or the paying of a preacher, we are loth to believe our liberal friends unwilling to give 50 cents a year for a paper like *THE TRUTH SEEKER*, thereby "giving their mite" towards helping along the cause of truth and right in our land.

Friend Wettstein's article, "COMMON CAUSE," on seventh page, was particularly unfortunate in the way of mistakes, thus: For *magnificent*, read *munificent*; for *active members*, read *active workers*; for *meet the approval*, read *merit the approval*; for *flag of infidelism*, read *colors of infidelism*; for, until properly demonstrated, which I believe I can do, read until properly demonstrated, which I believe I can; for friction would *invariably* ensue, read friction would *inevitably* ensue; for *conscious Spiritualist*, read *conscientious Spiritualist*; for *decipit*, read *deceitful*.

## WHICH IS IT?

Is it because our liberal friends (to thousands of whom we have mailed copies of our paper) love fifty cents more or prize *THE TRUTH SEEKER* less, that they respond so tardily to our appeal, with the pitiful sum we ask for it? We have expended some hundreds of dollars for stamps and otherwise to send our sheet broadcast over the land to every liberal person whose name we could obtain, and we confess to feeling disappointed and mortified that so many should fail to cheer us with half a dollar's worth of encouragement.

We flattered ourselves, when we started this sheet, that we were making the price so low, that in view of the fact that the country is not oversupplied with periodicals of this kind, that none could object to us on the score of cost; but we have learned to think *half a dollar* is really a good deal of money, in view of the reluctance with which many of our liberal friends seem to part with it. Yes, fifty cents will buy five or six pretty good cigars, or a few ounces of snuff or tobacco, or a dozen or two of oysters, or a ticket to the negro minstrels, and possibly, it is not right we should ask any one to

forego either of these pleasures merely to sustain the cause of truth, and have the reading of our paper for a year.

We will ask no one to impoverish themselves on our account. We will be glad to have *THE TRUTH SEEKER* live and flourish, but it had better go down to the shades of forgetfulness rather than we be the cause of bringing to poverty and destitution a single liberal soul.

There is really some experience to be had in getting up a subscription list. Some features of it are decidedly pleasant, and others again not so much so. For instance: When we receive letters from kind friends to whom we send sample copies, expressing great satisfaction with our paper, and promising not only to subscribe but to get up a club of a dozen or more, and then when two months have passed and we hear nothing further from these friends, we are forced to the alternative that their admiration for the paper has cooled down a little, or they find it unpleasant to part with the fifty cents.

It is quite possible some do not like our style, and they may have very good reasons for their views; true, we lay no special claim to culture or erudition, but we aim to say what we mean in a plain, straight-forward way, and not to use language to conceal our ideas. We endeavor to express the truth as we perceive it, and to clothe our remarks in such language that a majority of our readers can easily understand us.

We are not seeking to find fault or make complaint at the manner of our reception at the hands of the public. It has been as cordial and as earnest as we ought to expect. We have received many friendly greetings with warm words of commendation. It has cheered us very much to learn our position was approved and our efforts appreciated.

We hereby heartily thank our friends for their words of cheer, and for the warm interest numbers have taken in our cause. Many have gone earnestly to work and raised clubs of varying numbers. One friend has sent us forty subscribers, another twenty-five, another twenty, another fifteen, several twelve, ten and lesser numbers. Such friends make us proud. For the last few weeks names have been coming in freely. Every day additions have been made to our list that are truly encouraging, and we are receiving requests for specimen copies from all parts of the country. We fully believe in a reasonable time our list will reach such proportions as to render the enterprise a self-sustaining success. We are feeling hopeful and confident. We wish *THE TRUTH SEEKER* to become a permanent institution in our land, and firmly believe it will.

If any friends have feared it would be issued a few times only, and then subside, we beg to assure them such will not be the case; let them relinquish such fears. We hereby promise that to every patron shall be sent the full number of papers he subscribes for. The publication of it will be continued for a year at all events, and by that time we hope to have so large a number of readers and friends who will be unwilling for us to discontinue, that we will be impelled to go on for years, making the paper a decided success and "a power in the land."

It depends greatly upon our friends throughout the country how much of a success our enterprise shall become. If they "hold up our hands" and sustain us with "material aid" in our efforts, we promise to do our share to make *THE TRUTH SEEKER* a live, fearless, earnest advocate in the cause of truth, free thought and human progress.

We ask our friends to still continue their efforts in our behalf, and to do all they reasonably can to increase the number of our readers. We are furnishing the paper at a price so little above actual cost that we needs must have a large list of subscribers to pay running expenses. That number is not yet reached; BUT IT WILL BE. Then let us press forward with earnestness and zeal, each doing what we can in the glorious cause we have so near at heart.

(For the Truth Seeker.)

## A SERIOUS MISTAKE.

MR. EDITOR.—SIR:—As long as men will be men, i. e. variously organized beings, so long there will and must be just such differences of views, ideas and beliefs as we find prevail among them. For it requires just that sort of organization, of temperament, of special influences and experiences to produce the views, ideas and beliefs the individual must possess. All that we can ask then of the individual is to be sincere, honest and true to his convictions. We may often deplore that his convictions are wrong, that his views are false, his ideas not better enlightened and his belief distorted by a false zeal and bigotry; but all that we can do, or be entitled to do, is to endeavor to rectify his views, enlighten his mind and improve his belief by all legitimate efforts and means;—to ever get him to see things as we do, to reason as we do, and hence to believe as we do; we can never even hope—and ought never to purpose to ourselves *unreasonably*, since every individual must necessarily vary to some degree from ourselves in these matters. And this is, perhaps, one of the most benevolent provisions of Nature; for if all men ever could see things and reason on ideas and abstractions alike, then there might well be uniformity of views and beliefs among them—but all emulation and all progress would also soon die out. These are then great lessons, Mr. Editor, and they ought to teach us *Tolerance*.

I was, therefore, most disagreeably surprised to find in the last TRUTH SEEKER (October) such a bigoted protest against your proposed making "common cause" with Spiritualists from so thorough-going a Radical as Herman Wettstein. What can, Mr. Editor, be logically the object of any Radical or of Radicalism in general in regard to humanity? If it is any thing else than the improvement of the conditions and the increase of happiness of men in the fullest and widest sense; to promote and secure their individual liberty, and to assist those who do not yet enjoy it to gain it, and to thus unite all humanity into one great, free and happy brotherhood, then I have been mistaken; or, when it is—brother Wettstein is sadly mistaken in his protest. For it is not by only one method that this great object can be gained; not by our individual views and desires and efforts alone that all can be made wise and good and happy; but by the united views, desires and efforts of all true and good men; by the united exertion of all to realize this "common cause," this ultimate object of all. Materialists and Atheists will do it—if true—by their views and method; Deists, Pantheists and Spiritualists will—if true—do it according to their best views and their best method. Even God—believing Religionists—if true—will contribute, in their way, to it (if not sectarians). And this I think, is the great and beautiful aim of "Free Religion," if rightly understood and interpreted, and—if so understood—"Free Religion" is perhaps the best plan for the realization of this great object.

What, then, can possess our usually clear-headed friend Wettstein to be so arrogant and exclusive towards Spiritualists? I claim to be as radical, as materialistic, and withal as earnest in our "common cause" as friend W., and certainly as little a believer in "spirits" or the "Spiritual theory" as he is; yet at the same time I most gratefully accept Spiritualists as very efficient auxiliaries in the service of our "common cause."

Spiritualists as a class are Liberals, and I could often wish that all our sleepy and do-nothing Infidels had some of the "spirit" of Spiritualists to promote and help on our cause. It is mainly the Spiritualists on whom I can rely and on whose assistance I can always count in my efforts to promote our "common cause" in this "pious (?) city; the handful of "Liberals" "must be excused." And I believe it will be found thus in other localities. I find, for instance, that Spiritualists alone are liberal and independent enough to have the infidel and materialistic editor of the *Investigator*, the veteran Mr. Seaver lecture before them. If we were to imitate the intolerance of friend W. and in adopting his suicidal plan—refuse to fellowship and make "common cause" with Spiritualists and other Liberals, but not Materialists or Infidels, how could we ever hope to realize the latter's hope? How could we ever hope to agree among ourselves, since not all Materialists and Infidels even are agreed on all points and measures? In fact we could not agree with any one, and hence effect nothing. There are few men, if any, whom I esteem more sincerely and of whose merits in regard to our "common cause" I think higher than Mr. F. E. Abbott, of the *Index*, yet I am not agreed with him in many views he takes of things, and many a friendly argument have I had with him in many a "confidential" letter. Now according to this perverse logic of friend W. I would have to refuse to accept the aid of the champion of our "common cause." What monstrosity? No, Mr. Editor, every one Radical or Liberals, Atheist

or Pantheist, Materialist or Spiritualist—every one may be, and is, a valuable co-worker in our "common cause," provided he be an active, loyal and earnest and devoted laborer in our cause; Liberals merely in sentiment but not in acts are of no account, even if Materialists or Infidels. Go ahead, then, Mr. Editor, make "common cause" with all who will make "common cause" with you and you and your cause will prosper. As for individual views—be charitable and tolerant to all; let men "believe" (but not always act) as they please, pro or con, and allow them to "become blessed after their fashion" as the Great Frederic said.

Yours for toleration,

MORRIS EINSTEIN,  
Titusville, Pa.

(For the Truth Seeker.)

## A FEW NUTS FOR THE CLERGY.

1. What is the soul of man? Is it the will power? If so, has not the beast a soul also?
  2. When does the soul spring into existence?
  3. Was a soul ever known to exist without a body? Or in other words, was a spirit ever known without matter? Then if it requires matter to bring a spirit into existence, how can a spirit exist without matter?
  4. Does any person know anything except what the five senses teach? If not how can any thing be known about the spirit after death?
  5. Was Jesus Christ really God when he was an infant and soiling napkins, or was he a human child?
  6. Was Christ an advocate of intemperance when he ordered his Disciples to take wine in memory of him? Is it moral to advocate intemperance or to practice it?
  7. Was it sensible in Christ, or would it be in any one, to expect to find fruit upon the fig tree out of its season?
  8. How are the human family the children of God when Jesus Christ was His only begotten son?
- I see the Rev. Mr. Van Deursen (in the September number) wishes the name to be given. Mine is A. ERVIN, Lebanon, Oregon.  
September 25, 1873. "Now Shoot."

## CORRESPONDENCE.

The following are a few among the many similar kind greetings we have received from numerous friends in all parts of the country. They have truly been a source of pleasure to us while making efforts to introduce our little sheet. With the hope that they may be interesting to our readers, we take the liberty of presenting them the following. We have not room for all:

EDWARD PALMER, North Castine, Maine, writes: I yesterday received a copy of your paper. I scanned the heading—read the "Introductory"—mentally pronounced it right—looked at the terms—felt predisposed in its favor—read the whole thing, and came to the conclusion the little paper was more than its title claimed—a *Truth Finder and Dispenser*. For several years I have supported different liberal papers, and while in each I have found nutriment, I have been obliged to swallow too much water therewith for the comfort of the alimentary canal; but in the case of THE TRUTH SEEKER, the smallness of the package is a recommendation in its favor so long as the quality is so good. Enclosed find \$1 for two copies.

E. D. BLAKEMAN, Kalamazoo, Mich., writes: I have received the beautiful little TRUTH SEEKER and like it ever so much. I made up my mind at once to subscribe for it. It is one more unmistakable sign that "the world moves," and that in the right direction. I only wish there were a thousand more such spunky little organs of free thought. I must say I never read so much real, solid truth in any other paper of its size. I will try and get some subscribers for you, and wish you much success.

WM. McLEAN, Chillicothe, Ill., writes: After reading your impressive article "To the Friends of Free Thought" in your second number I was induced at once to do my duty and try to extend the circulation of THE TRUTH SEEKER. After a little exertion, I obtained the seven names enclosed. \* \* \* You flatter yourself truly when you say you have resented "a positive, fearless and outspoken sheet in the cause of truth and free speech at a low price." It would be cheap enough at double the price. That you feel discouraged at the apathy and indifference of the liberal element is not to be wondered at. Your appeal to friends of progress ought to stimulate every liberal in the land to exert himself a little in the cause of mental freedom. Let each and all of us put our "shoulder to the wheel" with a determination to extend the list of subscribers, which will be an honor to the cause of truth and a credit to ourselves, and thus place THE TRUTH SEEKER on a firm and sure financial basis. I trust your noble efforts may be abundantly rewarded.

C. D. GRIMES, New Albany, Ind., says: Yes, send us THE TRUTH SEEKER and we will try to give it wings, hoping it may also be an error hunter; that will hunt up and expose to light the last vestige of superstition and priestcraft, so that a religion of light and intelligence—of law and reason may prevail.

R. M. CASEY, Pendleton, S. C., says: Enclosed find money order for \$2.50 and names of five new subscribers. I received the first number of your paper last night, and read it through before going to bed and am well pleased with it, and am ready to do all in my power to promote its circulation. I have already, as you see, succeeded in obtaining a few subscribers notwithstanding this is a priest-ridden, bigoted community, and one in which a liberalist has a "poor show." Nevertheless there are few of us who have got "out of the woods," and we are determined to "tole" others out if we can. We bait with common sense only. You may send me an agency if you think proper. Herewith find references.

WM. C. MOORE, Lockport, N. Y., writes: Enclosed find 50 cents for THE TRUTH SEEKER. I consider your sheet the spiciest and most original of its kind extant. I shall look for succeeding numbers with interest.

J. W. PIKE, of Vineland, N. J., (Lecturer) writes thus from Shelby, Ohio:—I quite forgot my intention to subscribe for THE TRUTH SEEKER, and as I just saw the second number here at Mr. Alexander's, I hasten to remit. Send it to Mrs. Sarah M. Pike, Vineland, N. J. I hope you may succeed. I may be able to obtain subscribers for your admirable paper.

JOHN R. WETHERELL, West Pittsfield, Mass., says:—Enclosed please find subscription price of THE TRUTH SEEKER. I accidentally came across a copy, and was favorably impressed with its bold and fearless language. I am a Liberal and a friend to reform on all questions, but especially on the important one, Religion, which certainly needs a renovation, and a separation of truth from tradition. Success to THE TRUTH SEEKER.

R. W. WARE, Mullica Hill, N. J., writes:—I have received the first number of THE TRUTH SEEKER, and must say it pleases me very much. It is forcible as well as modest, and speaks my mind nearer than any paper I have ever yet seen. I inclose 50 cents, for which please send me sample copies to hand out to inquirers after truth.

J. F. RUGGLES, Bronson, Mich., says:—Enclosed please find 50 cents for THE TRUTH SEEKER one year. Your able little journal should not be allowed to perish through starvation, as did "The Iconoclast." Liberals should nourish and appreciate it.

R. H. DRAPER, Minneapolis, Minn., writes:—After perusing your courageous little sheet, I have concluded to contribute the modest sum you solicit for its support, with my best wishes for its success. Please continue a copy to my address.

JOHN M. DAVIS, P. M., Sturgeon, Ind., writes:—Enclosed please find fifty cents for which send me THE TRUTH SEEKER one year. I have before me a part of the first number which came to this office as a wrapper on a county paper, and contains your introductory, platform, &c., which has satisfied me THE TRUTH SEEKER is just the paper I have been wanting for years. If you will send me sample copies I will distribute them with pleasure.

R. G. WESTON, Cadonia Valley, N. Y., writes:—Enclosed find the subscription price of your fearless, profound little champion of liberty, equality and Liberalism. Will send you more subscribers soon.

S. O. GALE, Minneapolis, Minn., writes: I am surprised at the excellence of the first number of your paper just put into my hands. I never heard of your town before, but your publication is an honor to any town or city. Please add my name to your subscription list, and find 50 cents inclosed.

T. F. LEE, Grove Hill, Iowa, says: I wish to be classed with your Free Thinkers. Add my name to your list and send me THE TRUTH SEEKER one year.

OTTO SMITH, Davenport, Iowa, writes: It was with pleasure I greeted the birth of your journal. Of just such a mouth-piece of the cause of mental liberty we want a hundred or two more in this blessed land of ours. Superstition and priestcraft in all their various shades and hues, as yet so firmly combined, must at last give way to the morning rays of a better dawn. The tenor of your valuable sheet appears to correspond with the spirit of the glorious Boston Investigator, which "has sounded forth the trumpet that shall never call retreat." THE TRUTH SEEKER, I trust, will bravely "fall in" with the tocsin, and thus make the welkin ring, whilst the votaries of the strain keep time to the glorious march on the highway of true civilization. In view of the innumerable impediments artfully erected on said road, progress will naturally be tedious and difficult; but nevertheless, we will make such progress and so forever remove the filth and rubbish of the dark ages, which task to perform we owe to posterity. Let us all unite for that purpose. Let every friend of enlightened humanity carry a stone for the building of the temple of virtue and morality, and the edifice will be completed at last, and withstand the battering ram of the enemy and all its besieging forces. \* \* \* "The press is mightier than the sword." It is destined to deliver poor mankind. Why should you then waver in the noble execution of your noble enterprise? Enclosed find \$1 for a copy each for a friend and myself. Will send more soon.

W. F. FREEMAN, Stockton, Cal., writes: Enclosed find \$3.50 for seven copies of THE TRUTH SEEKER. To be sent to the names annexed. Your paper is just the thing for the California transient public, who are numerous, and not feeling well settled enough to take THE INVESTIGATOR, or THE INDEX. I think it will, as it should, be well supported.

A GEORGIA FRIEND, who has sent us many subscribers, writes: Enclosed find \$1 for two copies of your paper for myself. I make it a rule to subscribe for two copies of every truly Liberal paper published in the cause of humanity, one for my own use, and one to circulate among my neighbors. I dislike to have a good thing and not have others to share it with me. I am a materialist, and heartily support any enterprise enlisted in the advancement of the temporal interests of mankind. Success to your undertaking.

A FRIEND IN ARKANSAS, who sent us a good-sized club, writes as follows: May the Liberal mind of the country sustain you in your noble efforts to batter down the walls of superstition and ignorance which have so long stood as bleak barriers to circumscribe man's mental vision. Go on in your fearless search after truth. May you find the mystic key that will unlock the prison door of mental slavery, that a flood of sunlight may pour in upon the darkened abodes where now reigns supreme time-honored traditional, authoritative bigotry. "Light, light, more light. All honor to your noble efforts, and a hearty welcome to your field of labor."

F. D. SHERIDAN, St. Paul, Iowa, with a club of seven names, says: Long may your little sheet wave in the breeze of free thought. My sympathy has long been enlisted for the down-trodden and thought-bound. Myself and family are "liberal" in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation of Christians.

M. C. VANDERCOOK, Allegan, Mich., writes: Your TRUTH SEEKER is before me, also your appeal. I like the paper much, and will procure for you several subscribers if you will give me your assurance the publication will be continued one year. I ask this because I am a newspaper man and do not wish our people to lose confidence in me.

We hereby assure our friend and all others that THE TRUTH SEEKER WILL be continued one year; and to each subscriber will be mailed every number they subscribe for. None shall lose by us—send on the names.

EDITOR T. S.



## RELIGIOUS TOLERATION.

We know much has been said and written on this subject, and that we have frequently referred to it. But, then, we also know that too much cannot be said or written upon it, for it is of the utmost importance that toleration in religion, as well as in all things, should be exercised in society to the full extent. The spirit of intolerance has been the fell source of untold misery to the human family. It was this spirit that caused Nero to dip persons (who presumed to differ from him in their religious opinions, although good citizens) into melted pitch, and set them up to light his pleasure-ground with at night.

It was this spirit that burned 1,700 persons during the term of thirty-nine years (from 1564 to 1603) in Scotland; that executed 340,000 in England and France between the years 1600 and 1680; that roasted Michael Servetus to death over a slow fire in 1553, and that has ever been and still is a clog on the wheels of drossion.

From this spirit, under the pretense of suppressing heresy, millions of lives have been sacrificed on the altar of bigotry and superstition; or rather, on the altar of ambition—for ambition is at the bottom of it all—the ambition to rule, the ambition to make men bow down to the dictation and authority of others. How foolish to try to make all men think alike! Why you might as well attempt to make every old clock and watch run together. You may search the world over and you will fail to find two persons exactly alike, and why should you expect two persons to believe exactly alike. The more you resort to force to compel men to think alike the farther they are apart. The proper way, therefore, to produce uniformity of opinion is by a friendly interchange of ideas; by meeting and discussing the different views in an amicable spirit, with a view to elicit truth and to follow it wherever found, whether among Unitarians, Universalists, Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, Spiritualists or Infidels. The plant is divine wherever it may be found. To this end, the houses of worship of all denominations should be thrown wide open that the truth may be permitted to enter, regardless of strong barriers of prejudice.

It has been often remarked that there is less courtesy shown by the preachers than by any other profession. It is a shame and a disgrace that it is so, nevertheless it is true. They are ever ready to advise their members to close their church doors to free-thought and reformers. They make such ignorant dupes of some of their followers that they dare not think for themselves nor act contrary to the will of their masters—the priest or preacher. The cause why there is so little courtesy shown among preachers is to be attributed to that which we have already pointed out, the disposition to lord it over God's heritage—the human mind, and thus prevent people from thinking for themselves.

We insist upon this subject because we look upon religious toleration, investigation and discussion as the high road to knowledge, holiness and happiness. Yes, we demand free speech, a free press and a right to proclaim the truth to all mankind as we believe it is adapted to their needs; and, in the language of Cooper, we affirm that "If an opinion is erroneous it should be discussed in order that its errors may be exposed. If it be true it will gain adherents in proportion as it is examined." We go still further and say that whatsoever fears investigation manifests its own error. So long as people will not think, or let others think, or put impediments in the way of knowledge and inquiry, so long will they remain in ignorance, sin and superstition, and under the influence of fear, hatred and vice.

That you may ever keep your minds untrammelled from creeds and dogmas and be ever ready to seek for the truth is my humble prayer. Dear reader, will you answer this prayer and follow me through some future articles.

P. S. R.

Decatur, Ills.

## THE HINDOO GOD, RAM.

During the session of the Evangelical Alliance, Rev. Dr. Sheshadri, a converted Brahmin, related his experience. Among other things, he said that a Hindoo "god once lost his wife, and he was sore distressed. He sought for the lost one far and wide, but could not find her. At last one day he learned that she had been stolen and taken to the island of Ceylon. Forthwith he wrapped rags around his long tail, saturated them with oil, set them on fire, and visiting Ceylon, burned the whole island over. This story was more than I could swallow, and I began to listen to those who were preaching about Christ, and then to study the Christian religion. It was not long before my eyes were opened to the truth. Then I came into the fold, and have labored in it ever since."

Some day, some converted Christian, in relating his experience before some Evangelical Alliance

that will meet in Hindostan, will state that once a man named Samson caught a large number of foxes, tied a fire brand between their tails, and then loosed them among the corn of his enemies, and destroyed it by burning. He will then add that "this story was more than I could swallow, and I began to listen to those who were preaching about Vishnu,—and then to study the Brahmin religion. It was not long before my eyes were opened to the truth. Then I came into the fold, and have labored in it ever since."

Wrapping rags around one's tail, saturating them with oil, and then setting fire to them, for the purpose of spreading a conflagration, is, The Times submits, a more reasonable story than one in which a chap catches foxes in quantities, and ties them two and two with firebrands attached, in order to fire a neighboring cornfield. Let an entire stranger hear both for the first time, and assure him that he must accept one of them as a fact, and he would take the oil-saturated rag-on-a-tail, incident as the least objectionable. Just how the learned Dr. Sheshadri can reject Ram, and "swallow" Samson, is somewhat of a mystery.

What the Christian world should do is to get up a convention of all its thinkers and scholars, and go through the old Testament, and give it a thorough revision. The theoretical value of the Christian religion is badly affected by the attempt to force upon a thinking people as divine inspiration the absurd legends and fables related in the Bible proper. Jonah and his gourd, Lot and his daughters, Saul and the Witch of Endor, Noah and the ark, Job and his boils, Samson and the gates of Gaza, Joshua and the sun, Jonah and the whale, the eating of the apple from the tree of life, the account of the creation, the crossing of the Red sea, Joseph and the famine, and more especially the improbable episode about Joseph and Mrs Potiphar, together with a hundred other similar narrations, should be separated from the poetical and the historical portions of the old Testament, and be classified where they belong,—that is, among the crude imaginings and fanciful creations of nations in their infancy. The scheme of human redemption is complete in the New Testament. In it is found all the morality that constitutes the foundation of the Christian religion. The Bible should accompany the New Testament simply as explanatory of many of its utterances and references. The old testament is a dead-weight upon an enlightened Christianity. It relates to a Jehovah who was simply a barbarous and bloodthirsty demi-god. He was almost everlastingly engaged inciting a little band of half savages and wholly robbers, called the Jews, to the work of wholesale assassination and plunder. He seemed to create nations solely for the purpose of having the pleasure of seeing them smitten hip and thigh by his "chosen people,"—a band of cut-throats, who, if in existence to-day, would be hung, shot, guillotined, or otherwise exterminated as enemies of human kind. The Hindoo god, Ram, with his tail ablaze from the burning of oil-drenched rags, and burning up the possessions of those who stole his wife, is no less a respectable and desirable creation than the moloch of the Hebrew robbers, and whose especial delight was blood and slaughter.

Let the sublime doctrines of a "meek and lowly Jesus" be relieved of the burden of carrying this predatory assassin who was defied by certain tribes of savages in their early infancy, and they will at once attain a weight and influence infinitely greater than those they now possess.—Chicago Times.

For the Truth Seeker.

## THE NATURE OF THE UNIVERSE.

Being an Exposition of the Respective Claims of Materialism and Supernaturalism.

No. 7. Continued from The Boston Investigator, where the back numbers can be obtained.

The problems concerning the nature of the agencies instrumental in causing the infinite formations of matter pervading space, are of such magnitude that they must necessarily challenge the inquirer's most assiduous attention. To conceive correct ideas of the incentives to the manifold phenomena through which matter manifests its innate properties requires a life-time of patient study and devotion. These mysterious propensities of individual bodies of molecules has engrossed the attention of thinkers of ancient and modern times, and before satisfactory and adequate solutions can be arrived at, many generations will have to come and pass. The closest application of the most powerful mind is inadequate to do perfect justice to the work before it. No mortal can in the insignificant speck of an instant allotted to his sentient being in eternity, bestow the requisite amount of labor upon the solution of these questions which their diversity and importance demands.

The inquirer into the nature of matter will find that the task upon which he has entered is no child's play. Powers of no ordinary kind are essential to

enunciate the mysterious conditions from which existing bodies have been derived. We have seen in previous communications on this subject that the human mind for reasons then specified is not commensurate to solve problems relating to matters which gave him being. We can remain but *inside* the sphere which gave him birth. Our composition being of the elements of nature, our life depending for its sustenance and maintenance on these elements, and finally the fact that to dust will we return is a most conclusive argument in favor of the materialistic doctrine. But only an iota of what may be adduced. Mind is an emanation of matter, a property of the living organism of the brain, but as such can not conceive of conditions foreign to matter. To inquire "whence came matter," is not within the province and power of man to solve, no more than the Christian can say "Whence came God." We must confine our researches to tangible realities; we may be able to reduce matter to the most simple forms, so subtle and ethereal indeed as to create not the least wonder at its existence and diffusion through space. And from *thence* can we commence to build up the various aggregations of matter pervading the Universe. But as I have remarked the inquirers whole mental powers must be concentrated and brought to bear upon the problems before him. Heart and "soul" must be enlisted in the vigorous prosecution of his work. His whole sympathies must be enrolled in the service of Nature. Inattention to the objects under consideration would impair and finally subvert the faculties destined by nature for the execution of these labors.

As he advances in his explorations he will encounter difficulties of which he had no previous conception. Obstructions on all sides will meet his gaze apparently debarring his further progress. But he must not shrink from endeavoring to surmount any obstacles which may obtrude themselves. With indefatigable perseverance must he continue his efforts to overcome whatever may oppose. With unflinching footsteps must he wander onward into the intricate mazes of Nature. Onward and onward must he march in quest of her hidden gems and expose her golden treasures to the gaze of the admiring multitudes. Onward and onward must he be impelled by an all-controlling impulse to penetrate her labyrinthian ramifications till at last he can exclaim:

"Veni! Vidi! Vici!"

H. WETTSTEIN.

HARVARD, ILL., Oct. 18, 1873.

[To be continued.]

## SCIENTIFIC MEMORANDA.

"The most accurate estimates state that China possesses coal-fields to the extent of over 400,000 square miles! One province (Shansi) having no less than 31,000 square miles, with veins from 12 to 30 feet in thickness."

"Perhaps no greater injury has ever been done in horticulture than the recommendation by inexperienced writers of *chip manure* as a dressing. Its danger arises mainly from its ready disposition to spread fungi, which inevitably arise in soils naturally a little moist and tenacious. When once formed, such fungi spread with astonishing rapidity, totally preventing growth, and finally killing plants."

"It is stated by Mr. Robert S. Gregg that the echoes in buildings may be broken or destroyed by stretching fine wires across the rooms in which they exist. According to the experiments related, care must be taken not to use too many wires, or the necessary resonance of sound will also be destroyed."

"Absolutely pure iron is said to have been produced by a Russian chemist by means of the galvanic battery. During the process a large quantity of hydrogen was disengaged from the ordinary iron used. The pure iron is a silver white metal, very malleable and ductile, and so soft as to be readily cut into with a pair of scissors. It is very different from iron which has hitherto been supposed to be pure. It oxidizes very rapidly, and water is decomposed by it by the rapid absorption of oxygen."

"The largest cheese factory in Vermont is at Jericho, Crittenden county, where it at present takes the milk of 700 cows—a number to be increased to 1,000 next year—and turns out about 300 cheeses per day, of 50 pounds each, from about 10,000 pounds of milk."

"It is said that glycerine mixed with the water in steam-engine boilers prevents the depositions of lime-salts, and, consequently, prevents the boiler from incrustation. About one pound of glycerine to every three hundred pounds of coal burned, is sufficient for this purpose."

"An English paper predicts that steel bars will be soon substituted for bells. They are light, and give much more scope to architectural design in the steeple. They are more easily rung, less expensive and less liable to crack."

"Discoveries of borax in California and Nevada have been made to such an extent as to warrant the belief that from these sources the markets of the Atlantic States will, at no distant time, be able to draw their supplies."

"The Italians are said to exhibit specimens of dead human bodies—preserved according to the Brunetti method—which are hard as stone, retaining the natural shape perfectly, and being equal to the best wax models."

"Providence has 85 jewelry manufacturing establishments, employing 2,250 persons, and doing a business of \$6,300,000 annually."

"Chloroform will remove paint from a garment or elsewhere, when benzine or bisulphide of carbon fails."

# THE TRUTH SEEKER;

D. M. BENNETT, EDITOR.  
PARIS, ILLINOIS.

## THE BIBLE.—No. 2.

There is nothing easier than for an infatuated or a designing person to say "*Thus Saith the Lord.*"

A claim has in all ages been set up by a certain class of the human family that it was their right and office to know what the mind and will of God was, and to communicate the same to their fellow beings. As far back as history extends there has been this class of personages who assumed to know more of the purposes of God than those around them, and have claimed that their assertions relative to the commands and will of God must be taken as infallible and imperative.

This class of men have been styled Oracles, Seers, Prophets and Priests; and though in no way superior to their fellows, they have claimed they had superior facilities for learning the mind of God, and sometimes have asserted they have seen Him and conversed with Him "face to face."

These claims have been the means by which ambitious men have acquired and maintained complete control over their fellow men; and with a rod of iron have they often ruled over their confiding dupes. The greater the ignorance of mankind has been the more this class of prophets and *agents of the Almighty* have flourished, and the more exacting and humiliating have been their claims and demands.

In the ages of the past, numerous prophets have arisen and by enforcing upon the minds of their credulous followers that they were commissioned directly by God to lead and rule the multitudes have, in many instances, been able to exercise immense power and control; but always fastening upon their dupes and followers the chains of bondage and oppression.

Moses was a striking instance of this kind, Mahomet was another; and there have been hundreds and probably thousands of others of greater or lesser magnitude who have flourished for a time and then sunk into oblivion.

In our own time we have had the "prophet" Joseph Smith, who assumed to speak for God and to tell his followers what Deity required of them. He also wrote a book, (which his followers have called a "Bible") wherein he claimed the will of God was portrayed, and his disciples believe it as implicitly as Jews and Christians believe the writings of a similar character ascribed to Moses; and they probably revere the Mormon Bible in about the same way that Christians revere the Jewish Bible. Brigham Young, the successor of Joseph Smith, still rules the thousands of his followers with imperative authority—which he claims to obtain directly from God; and when he speaks to his people they doubtless think they are virtually hearing the voice of God.

A few months ago we had an instance of a "prophet" setting up his claim that he was commanded by God to lead his "chosen people" to a "land of promise." In this case the prophet was a negro and the location South Carolina. By dint of repeated harangues, representations and assertions, his followers were soon induced to believe he truly was a "prophet from the Lord," and they were ready to follow him whithersoever he commanded. It has always been easy for these prophets to gain hearers and followers. There seems to be a quality and disposition in the human mind easily influenced and imposed upon, and ready to fall in with the most absurd claims that may be advanced. So it was in South Carolina. This negro prophet found followers who believed every word he uttered. When he told them God commanded them to dispose of their property and to prepare themselves to start on their journey to the "promised land," they obeyed with alacrity and parted with their personal effects—their cows, their

hogs and household goods, obtaining little or nothing in return. When the prophet told them God required a human sacrifice at their hands before starting upon the journey, they at once took steps to obey the mandate. An aged negro woman was the selected victim, and she doubtless would have been offered up a sacrifice to God had not the authorities interfered and prevented the execution of the bloody command.

These infatuated people were doubtless sincere and had the fullest "faith" in the utterances of their prophet; and possibly the prophet himself was also sincere, and believed God wished him to lead his chosen band to a land of promise and plenty; for we have heard of instances where fanatics and enthusiasts have imagined themselves even to be God Almighty.

This is only another instance of the danger and folly of yielding assent to the claims and assertions of prophets when they claim to speak for God.

When mankind become fully enlightened they will perceive and understand that this is not the manner in which Deity reveals Himself to man. He does not whisper His will, or communicate it privately to some obscure individual and command him to convey the intelligence to the masses. If such a procedure was possible it could be revelation only to the party to whom the direct communication was made, and could not possibly be revelation to those who got it second, third, tenth or fiftieth handed.

We believe the Ruler of the Universe speaks alike to all nations and to all individuals, and that it is wholly unnecessary for Him to select now and then a person here and there to whom to make known His special purposes to the exclusion of the world at large. This is not his style of doing business. He requires no "go-betweens"—no mouth pieces—no prophets to make known his will to humanity. He speaks in such a plain manner that every human being has an equal right and chance to understand him.

And so long as we believe this to be true and realize how easy it is for prophets and mouth pieces to say "thus saith the Lord," when they have not the slightest authority for doing so; and when we bear in mind how much the world has been duped or imposed upon in this way, and how much error, superstition and darkness has been spread over the earth by this course, we shall attach very little importance to what any prophet or oracle has to say and yield a very sparing credence to their assertions and injunctions, whether it be Moses, David, Mahomet, Joe Smith, Brigham Young or the negro prophet of South Carolina.

As we have other matter quite sufficient to fill this issue we will defer the further consideration of this subject for future numbers.

## THE FEAR OF DEATH.

An essential advantage which unbelievers in the dogmas pertaining to the Devil, Hell and an angry and vindictive God, is the relief we feel in regard to death and the terrors of a future existence. Immense numbers of Christians believe that God has prepared a place of endless torture for countless billions of his children, where they must suffer forever for following the impulses and dispositions inherent in their natures and for not believing certain doctrines which priests assert are true and must be assented to.

Many are tortured with the worst fears and forebodings lest their lot should not be cast with the select few for whom Paradise is prepared, but with the immense multitudes which are plunged into the bottomless pit of darkness where there is perpetual "weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth."

It is truly a horrible doctrine that nine-tenths, or rather, ninety-nine hundredths of the human family who had no agency whatever in their coming into existence, nor in the dispositions and incentives which control them; should be doomed to suffer indescribable torments forever; while a small number

—a mere minute fraction of the human family, are to be wafted on angel's wings to the realms of eternal bliss where their joys can know no bounds and never find an end. And this immense difference in the future condition of mortals is to be decided by the most trifling variations of conduct; for the difference between the lives of believers and unbelievers is so slight as scarcely to be discovered by the closest observer. The christian professor is just as liable to yield to improper motives as the non-professor; he is found to worship just as devotedly at the shrine of mammon; he is equally as eager for the "almighty dollar;" he is as ostentatious, as fond of this world's goods, as sharp in making a bargain to get the better of his fellow man; he is equally as sordid and selfish and no more inclined to put his hands into his pockets and give to the needy than he who makes no profession or pretension to saintship. In all that constitutes good citizenship, upright conduct, manly bearing, honesty, truthfulness, hospitality and benevolence the church member seems to have no superiority over the skeptic or unbeliever, whom he despises and contemns. The main difference between the two is that the church member—the would-be saint gives his assent to a series of improbable and unreasonable dogmas which have been handed down from generation to generation since the days of paganism by a designing priesthood which the skeptic finds it impossible to believe or to be in harmony with right and truth and justice.

This blind assent—this unquestioning credence—this "*faith*" the believer flatters himself is accounted to him for righteousness and entitles him to the blissful joys of the New Jerusalem, while his studious but doubting brother, who finds it impossible to believe a Being is at the same time Father and Son to himself; that, one is three and three are one; that God created a Devil to beguile and tempt and mislead his erring and short sighted children in this life and to torture them thro' the countless ages of eternity, with a similar set of absurdities, is consigned to that terrible place of agony and suffering "where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched."

We repeat, THE DOCTRINE IS A HORRIBLE ONE and must have been devised by misguided human beings or monsters in the form of men. It has been the terror of the world for centuries. This fear of an angry unforgiving God, of a malicious, tormenting Devil and of an endless burning hell—vital doctrines in the Christian religion and essential agencies upon which it mainly depends for the increase of its adherents—has been the bane of humanity for hundreds of years. Death has been called the "King of Terrors" because it was believed it gave hapless mortals direct conveyance either to an angry God or to a malicious Devil, with more than ten chances to one of its being the latter, and he doomed to endless torture.

How many thousands and millions have through life feared this would be their fate at death. How they have trembled and shuddered at the dread of leaving this world. In their waking and sleeping hours it has been almost a constant nightmare to them. How many parents have feared lest when the "vale is passed" that their beloved children and themselves will be forever separated—one or two perhaps being admitted within the "gates of the beautiful city," while the large proportion are cast down into the dark gulf of indescribable torment. How have husbands and wives, relations and friends, acquaintances and strangers been racked by fears, tortured by forebodings, troubled with misgivings with a "fearful looking forward" to the dreadful "day of judgment" and that terrible place of punishment prepared for those of little faith.

The increase of modern liberalism under various phases and forms has done much to modify and soften these harsh and repulsive doctrines. Hell has been robbed of some of its brimstone, but still God is held to be vindictive, and Death, as ever, a King of Terrors. Vast numbers of the human family are made unhappy by the fear of Death and a dread of what follows it. Great numbers of people

have been driven to the verge of raving insanity by this belief. We have ourselves known many well disposed people whose lives were embittered by this constant fear and dread of Death and Eternity. In Christian nations it is the common rule. The matter is so uncertain; whether a sure passport to the realms of happiness has been secured or whether their doom is down in the regions of the damned, is the one great, momentous question they are unable to solve, and this uncertainty is a constant source of unhappiness and dread.

From all these fears and terrors liberals and spiritualists are free. They discard the doctrine of a vindictive, unrelenting God, of a malicious tormenting Devil and of an endless burning Hell. It is clear to them these monstrosities are the senseless vagaries—the relics of past ages of superstition and darkness. They perceive them to be the agencies by which the priesthood have sadly worked upon the fears of ignorant multitudes and by which they have held the masses in subjection to their control.

We calmly look upon death as a simple condition of nature and not to be feared or dreaded. We see life and death, organization and decomposition, formation and decay following each other as regularly as day and night, spring and autumn, summer and winter. We perceive death to be a natural consequence of life—a quiet sleep and rest after the cares and toils of an anxious life are over.

The couplet of Dr. Johnson often recurs to our mind and we think the sentiment far more consoling than the fear of death entertained by Christians.

"'Tis a glorious boon to die  
This favor can't be prized too high."

Life of course is sweet to the whole human family, save to such as are borne down by mental or physical sufferings; but death should be regarded as a friend rather than an enemy; and God should be viewed as an Overruling Power, beneficent and kind rather than a vindictive and unforgiving tyrant.

We cannot see that in the control of the affairs of this life that God sends judgments or punishments upon any of the human family. The afflictions and troubles we meet with are either the direct result of our own actions or other natural causes. If we thrust our hand into the fire and are burned, we bring suffering upon ourselves as a consequence. God does not punish us for it. If we lead lives of dissipation, immorality and vice, thereby losing the esteem and respect of our fellows and become vagabonds and outcasts among men, it is a penalty we bring upon ourselves by our own bad conduct and God does not inflict it. If by the explosion of a boiler;—a "smash up" on a railway, or any similar catastrophe human life is destroyed, it is unjust to say God sent it as a judgment. It is wholly the result of natural causes, arising perhaps from the carelessness of some individual who is responsible for it while God is not.

We take the position that God is never vindictive and never sends curses or judgments in this state of existence or any other. There are established natural laws for the control of every conceivable condition of things and when these laws are violated the penalty must follow as a natural result.

Whether it is as our spiritualistic friends assure us, that the spirit of a man lives after he is dead, that we continue to be conscious, progressive, sentient beings after death has passed upon us, the same as we are now, or whether it is as Materialists assert that mentality is solely the result of organization of matter and that when death comes this intellect ceases to exist, individuality terminates, the elements, gasses and component parts of the body are set free and return to the great fountain of Nature whence they emanated [and we confess we have no positive information as to which of these doctrines is true, though we hope it is the former] death has not the terrors which the Christian religion attaches to it. By neither spiritualism or materialism does death hand us over to a merciless, unforgiving Being. Neither doctrine lands countless billions of the

human family into perpetual and hopeless torment. It is reserved for the Christian religion to inflict this terrible doom upon mankind.

Neither Spiritualism nor Materialism teaches that this world is governed by a punishment-inflicting and judgment-sending Deity who is constantly dispensing accidents and disasters, famine and pestilence, war and carnage, disease and death upon the helpless children of his own creation. Neither teaches that any such merciless, governing Power rules either before death or after.

We take the ground that God is kindness and goodness in all times and in all places and localities. That in passing out of this state of existence we have no more to fear or apprehend from the anger or vindictiveness of the Supreme Power than we would in changing our residence to Europe, Canada or to any one of the United States.

We can truthfully assert, we do not fear death. We hope of course it may not be our fortune to linger a long time and suffer the pains of dissolution as many unfortunately do; but as for death itself, and what is in reserve for us after it, we have no fears whatever. Our Deity is kind to us here and we have all confidence he will continue so when we go hence.

### THE EVANGELICAL ALLIANCE.

This distinguished body—"The Ecumenical Council" of Protestantism, has met, performed its labors and dispersed. Altho' its actions may remind us somewhat of Esop's fable of "The Mountain in labor" when it brought forth a mouse; we must try we suppose nevertheless to feel a vast amount of veneration for a body so dignified and so pious.

Whether their labors will materially tend to elevate and enlighten Humanity is an open question. If mankind should refuse to be led always by such guides the blame possibly will not lie at their own door.

Their heaviest batteries seemed to be directed towards their maternal relative—*Catholicism*. This conduct seems rather unfilial to say the least; for their creeds, dogmas and their entire stock in trade they obtained from the Catholic church and because they saw fit to rebel in former times against the authority of their mother and set up business for themselves, it seems rather ungrateful that they should say such hard things against their ma ma. There evidently is not much love or affection between parent and child.

These savans also directed "hot shot," or what they intended for hot shot towards science and skepticism, but they fell far short of their mark. Their ammunition was weak. Science and Skepticism will have nothing to fear from such assaults. The noise and din may possibly call the attention of beholders to the contest and this will ultimately benefit the cause of Science and Skepticism.

Altho' they failed to unify the numerous discordant and antagonistic creeds and doctrines into which Protestantism is divided, with asinine wisdom they laid down the following platform upon which all the faithful must stand and to which every orthodox Christian is required to subscribe:

1. The divine inspiration, authority and sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures.
2. The right and duty of private judgment in the interpretation thereof.
3. The Unity and Trinity of the Godhead.
4. The utter depravity of human nature in consequence of the fall.
5. The incarnation of the Son of God.
6. Justification by faith.
7. The influence of the Holy Spirit.
8. The immortality of the soul.
9. The resurrection of the body.
10. The final judgment.
11. The divine institution of the Christian Ministry.

We have not room here to enter into a discussion of the untenability of most of the Dogmas thus officially announced nor to show up their ridiculousness. We have nothing to say against No's 2 and 8, tho' as regards the latter we are not entirely free from doubt; but as to No's 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10 and 11, they may not only be regarded as "shaky" but absolutely absurd.

In this advanced portion of the nineteenth century,

it would seem a body of learned men convoked from distant parts of the earth ought to be able to promulgate and recommend to their fellow men propositions and doctrines more in keeping with the spirit of the age and more congenial with reason, truth and common sense. Have they nothing better for us than the obsolete, worn out and super-annuated dogmas of past ages of superstition and darkness?

We truly have little to hope from Ecumenical Councils or Evangelical Alliances. They aim much more to bind the human mind than to make it free. But thanks to truth and science, the world is fast emerging from under the control of such mental despotisms.

Of what are these bodies composed? Who are these men who assume to do the thinking for the world? They are men who have been pampered by the church—an un-producing class of mortals who have added nothing to the wealth of the world by their own toil, but live upon the toils and labors of others. They are paid munificent salaries amounting individually to several thousands of dollars a year for doing little else than teaching such senseless doctrines as the foregoing. O what a silly expenditure of money! What a bad investment it has been and still is!

Suppose the people should suddenly open their eyes and see the folly of supporting such drones and immediately "shut off" their supplies of "bread and butter," would there not be trouble in the camp? Would there not be a "scattering" among the "dry bones?" Would they not "stand from under?"

Seriously, we frankly confess we feel little veneration or respect for this kind of "gentry"—this baleful aristocracy that seek to live by the sweat of other's brows—to hold back the world's progress and to bind fetters upon the human mind.

### Proof of the Efficacy of Prayer.

During the recent discussion upon this subject in one of our city papers, [the conclusion of which is given in this number of *THE TRUTH SEEKER*] the matter was being talked over by a small group of our citizens. A pious church member, Mr. K. was asked if he ever knew of a case where prayer made any change in the course of events. After thinking for a short time he said "yes," he "knew of one case"—"he had a little boy four years of age who was very anxious to whistle but could not, and his mother told him he must pray to God to learn him how to whistle. He accordingly prayed and in a short time he could whistle."

Now is not that a "clincher?" Which is the more probable—that the Ruler of the Universe, who has 200,000,000 millions of human beings on this globe to attend to as well as millions of worlds larger than this, requiring his attention should see fit to stop and learn that little boy to whistle; or that the boy learned it by the exercise of his own powers, the same as other little boys do?

### RECEIVED,

No. 1, Vol. 1 of *The Freeman*, devoted to literature and miscellany, published by BURKE & STREET, Leavenworth, Kansas. It is gotten up in fine style, is ably conducted, and having 16 pages of the size of *Harper's Weekly*, contains a large amount of original and selected reading matter. It is liberal in sentiment, and we recommend it favorably to the reading, thinking public. Published monthly; price 15 cents per copy, or \$1.50 per year.

*The Saturday Evening Mail*, of Terre Haute, Ind., in its last issue gave *THE TRUTH SEEKER* a friendly notice, as well as some criticisms. We would be glad to quote the article and make a few remarks in reply, but we have not room in this number. We are obliged to defer our respects to *The Mail* till the December number.

### DONATIONS

From friends to aid *THE TRUTH SEEKER* until it is able to go alone:

Joseph Bradbury, Paris, Ill. .... \$5 00  
John Walthall, Paris, Ill. .... 2 00  
Dr. M. Rowe, Dudley, Ill. .... 50

If other liberal friends feel inclined to do anything in this way, the same will be quite acceptable, and we will cheerfully give due credit.

## DISCUSSION ON PRAYER, ETC.

[Continued from our last number.]

## Rev. Wm. Holt's Reply to Mortimer.

[From the Gazette.]

EDITOR GAZETTE: Your issue of July 2d contains another lengthy article from D. B. Mortimer—*falsely so called*—claiming to be a reply to my article copied from the *Beacon and Blade*, and doubtless our citizens will agree with me in saying that it is not a reply to anything that I have said; but for absurdities, self-contradictions, harsh epithets and personal insinuations, it is certainly a masterpiece, and the Dr. is welcome to all the notoriety and credit which can possibly be derived from such communications. This is just what we may expect from "the enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end," says St. Paul, "is destruction." Phil. iii. 14. What a pity it is that the Dr. could not control his bad temper and keep it from cropping out, but such is the weakness of humanity when uncontrolled by the Divine influence.

Only a few things need be said to bring this *ungodly* assault upon christianity and its advocates to a close, and we wish the community to bear in mind the fact that this war was commenced by those scientific, liberal-minded and good-hearted (?) gentlemen, and simply because I volunteered to contribute my mite in defense of the Bible and humanity, and so successfully routed them from their hiding-place, exposing their glaring sophistry; pointing out the barrenness of the soil upon which they stand, I am made the object of their ill-temper and harsh epithets.

The community will understand all this. The opposers of the Bible are generally at peace among themselves, and had I let the *Doctor alone* in his burlesque upon prayer doubtless I would have been one of the "white sheep." But in this I seem to be unfortunate.

The mode of warfare adopted by the Dr. is never resorted to by controversialists when they have other material on hand; but when a man is completely vanquished, when his darling hobby is swept away, he must either surrender like a man or resort to personal abuse as he has done.

But I must *not retaliate*. Our Lord did not: "When reviled he reviled not again, when persecuted he threatened not, but committed himself to Him who judgeth righteously."

We would infer from the doctor's reference to the "crazy woman" who quoted scripture so fluently that my quotations had set *his* head swimming. In fact, I think that I can prove to the satisfaction of every one, from his own articles, that his head is just the opposite to what it was when he wrote his first article; that it has, to say the least, gone half way round. Hear him: "For many years I lived a devout and prayerful life, but after reviewing my past life I could not see that I had effected much by my prayers, and to-day I am unable to call to my mind a single instance in which my prayers had the slightest effect in changing the Deity."

Now cannot every one see from the above quotation that during the "many years" of his prayerful life that his only conception of the efficacy of prayer was that it *changed* the mind of God?

Hear one of the authors quoted and indorsed by the doctor in his last article: "The *change* which our devotions are intended to make is upon ourselves and not upon the Almighty." *That sounds about right*. Where now are his infidel objections to prayer? In view of *this radical change* in the doctor's position, we should thank God and take courage; for it is clearly to be seen that his head is just right on this subject. We also trust the very remembrance of the "crazy woman" will be beneficial to the doctor and all who have been influenced by him, and if we could only quote as many scriptures as this "crazy woman" (for he says she could quote two passages to our one) and thereby swim his heart around with his head, he would trouble the community no more with his infidel views, and doubtless he would have better success in his devotions than he had while trying to "change the mind of God."

When the doctor wrote his first essay, he implicated ALL the clergymen as standing in defense of prayer because it was an occupation—"they prayed for money!" but it seems now that he has respect for all except the "black sheep." Well, we are happy to report him convalescent upon this subject also; we hope that he may continue to improve. But he puts the following questions directly to me: "Does the gentleman say it is not for money that he preaches and prays?" I SAY IT IS NOT! "If the pay was to be stopped, would not the preaching and praying stop also?" No SIR. I can say, without fear of successful contradiction, that I have preached and prayed without remuneration; can and will do so again if necessary. But all such insinuations against the motives of those who stand up in defense of the religion of Jesus Christ, are wicked in their

very nature, and *this* may be the reason why the doctor tried to hide behind a fictitious name until the editor of the *Paris Beacon* raised the curtain.

The doctor did say that "Moses and Saint Luke were very eminent and good men in their days," but now he says that "Moses was a cruel tyrant—a murderer—a robber," etc. But this he says is only his modification. If it is not a palpable contradiction of himself, I defy any man to make one. Now, if the doctor will thus lampoon this ancient and faithful servant of God, whom Paul says "was faithful as a servant," what may christians of to-day expect?

The gentleman assumes that the Midianites were an honest, inoffensive nation, but if the reader will examine 25th chap. of Numbers he will find that they had vexed and opposed the Israelites, and that God commanded Moses to slay them for their wickedness. Moses was a law-giver chosen of God; he lived and ruled under a dispensation of *temporal* rewards and punishments, and was simply executing the law against evil doers. The doctor could upon the same hypothesis accuse George Washington, A. Lincoln and U. S. Grant of murder. But this he would not do, therefore he should not abuse Moses.

But the doctor says that "Jesus was a good man, actuated by the *best* of motives, but he did not understand the sciences," etc. Then he was not as wise as the doctor; for he knows enough of the sciences to take him away from the religion of his fathers, and his otherwise prayerful life. That, to say the least, sounds like presumption. If Jesus was a good man he did not try to deceive the people; and, unless his immediate followers were *deceived*, christianity is true, and this is all we want to know.

Three questions answered and the christian religion established, or proven to be divine:

1st. Was Jesus a good man and actuated by the best of motives? This the doctor answers himself in the affirmative.

2d. Were the apostles *honest men*? The second will be answered in the same way by all who will look for a moment at the sacrifices made and the hardships endured by them. Dishonest men do not sacrifice all worldly goods and even their own lives for what they *know* to be false. But the apostles did all this, therefore they were honest men.

3d. Were the things to which they testified plain and tangible? If so, the questions are all answered. Let us see. They were with Him three and a half years, heard his teaching, witnessed his wonderful miracles, saw him arrested, saw him stripped of his own raiment, saw him fall under the cross which they compelled him to bear, saw him nailed to and hanging upon the cross, heard the rumbling of the rocks as they were being rent, felt the trembling of the earth under their feet, saw the sun hide his face, and the consequent darkness which enshrouded the earth. Were these facts plain? Could they have been deceived in these things? Surely not. Then after he was risen from the dead they were equally plain. We would like to pursue this train of thought further but space forbids at present. We will continue in this faith until convinced of its fallacy.

In reply to the doctor's last and lovely (?) paragraph, I will say that his insinuations are unjust and most of them untrue, but he tries to justify himself by my reference to the words of Jesus: "Men love darkness," etc. But doctor, I did not apply this passage to you, only upon the condition that you remain in the dark, refuse to define your faith, etc.

It may be that if our lives (prior to my conversion to Christ) were compared, that the doctor would be considered the better man of the two, from the fact that he informs us that the first half of his life was spent in a devout and prayerful manner. Mine was not. I frankly confess that I had sinned in many ways, and because the Lord in his great mercy saved me from those sins, I love him most dearly. But the difference seems to be about this: That while I was made to see and abhor sin, and by the help of God endeavored to turn away from it, that about that time the doctor turned away from the good old religion of our fathers and became a skeptic.

Again he says: "I have never murdered, I have never robbed, I have aimed not to bear false witness," etc. Will the gentleman say that Mr. Holt has committed either of these crimes? If he feels disposed, let him say that I have. I can also say that I was not the companion of drunkards to any great extent, but, like many other young men. I was for a few years occasionally tempted and drawn away. As it regards the gambling alluded to by the doctor. I will say, for his edification, that the greater part of my gambling was done when but a boy at an occasional shooting match, and I was almost as successful with the rifle as I am now in opposing infidelity.

As to your reference to the plow lines, I will only say, ask those who know *all about* the circumstances. I refer the reader to Thos. Cox, ten miles east of this city; also, Benj. Vanhauften, Wm. Hodgins, Philo

Harkness, Jordan Noblet, Ira Poe, in fact *every substantial* citizen of that vicinity. All that was done, doctor, was in defense of my aged mother, my wife and the peace of my own family. But I now fight with the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God, and would not hurt a hair on any one's head under the sun. For honesty and truthfulness, even before my relationship with the church, I think that I would compare not unfavorably with the doctor. The true man will confess his faults. I think I can say, and my brethren will bear me witness, that where I have been known longest, there I am loved most. This doctor, so far as we are concerned, *closes the war*.

Wm. Holt.

From the Gazette of July 9th.

## MORTIMER'S REJOINDER.

EDITOR GAZETTE: I notice Mr. Holt is out again with another of his characteristic articles (directed to myself) in the last issue of your paper; also in some one or two thousand additional sheets, many of which he distributed himself. It strikes me he is using considerable ammunition for *small game*. (He counts me, I believe, with the "small skeptics.")

At the end he says "*this closes the war*." It is entirely with himself. He began it, so far as *we* are concerned, and now if he is ready to quit, I am content. As he opened the discussion, however, the *closing* belongs to me.

I can make but little of this last effort of the gentleman's. I find but little *argument* in it, but numerous mis-statements, misrepresentations, misquotations, and much of boastfulness. I will notice a few instances:

1. He says "the name Mortimer is false." This is untrue; it is my real name, and not at all false. He says again I tried to hide behind a "fictitious name," until his friend, the editor of the *Beacon*, "raised the curtain" on me. By raising the curtain, I think said editor exposed his own misrepresentations and unfairness more than any dishonesty of mine.

2. Twice Mr. Holt accuses me of "ill temper," and without truth. I was not in ill temper at all, and was never in better humor in my life.

3. He accuses me of using "harsh epithets" toward him. Untrue again. I did nothing of the kind. I called him no hard names, and said nothing ungentlemanly.

4. He accuses me of using "personal abuse." I deny it, and defy him to point out a word of personal abuse in my article.

5. He says I implicated *all* the clergy. This is false. I implicated none.

6. He speaks of my "burlesque on prayer." This is uncalled for. I have not burlesqued it, but endeavored to argue the question fairly.

7. He says I have contradicted myself. Wholly untrue, and his efforts to show it are mere sophistry and effrontery. Is it not to be regretted that a Divine should suffer himself to resort to such pitiful quibbles, dodges and subterfuges?

8. Not in a single instance where he has undertaken to quote me has he done so correctly. He says I *did* say Moses and Luke were very eminent and good men. I certainly *did not*, and I am surprised he should make such an assertion with my article before him. My words were, they *may* have been very eminent, etc. There is a wide difference, (if Mr. Holt ever noticed it) between asserting a matter *positively* and admitting *it may have been* so. The latter expression implies at least as much doubt as belief. Here one of his strongest "palpable contradictions" falls completely to the ground.

There are several other misquotations and misrepresentations, but I will let them pass, as well as his slings about my "ungodly assault," "wicked insinuations," "enemy of the cross," etc., as possessing very little force, and unworthy a reply. I will just ask the gentleman, however, if this is "the mode of warfare resorted to by controversialists when they have other material on hand?"

The gentleman asks if I wished to accuse him of murder, robbery and bearing false witness? By no means. I never, for a moment, supposed him guilty of these crimes, and did not mean to insinuate that he was. I charged him with *no* crime or misconduct. His insinuations were that my belief arose from bad conduct, whereupon, in vindication of myself, I mentioned several crimes of which I had not been guilty. I did not say he had been guilty of either of them or any others, and, if not, I cannot see why he should be so much disturbed. I felt that his innuendoes and insinuations called for all I said, and it is hardly with good grace that he now turns and complains of my using insinuations. He was the first to resort to them; not me. I really know but little of the gentleman's life, past or present, and am glad to learn by his own statement that it has been so blameless. I certainly have no desire to believe to the contrary, or to hunt up proof to show improprieties upon his part. He says, also, "where he is known the longest he is loved the best." That is truly a lovely state of things; but I



believe if it was true of myself, I would rather prefer some other person to say it.

Some people are troubled with an excess of modesty, and are hardly disposed to claim all the merit they are really entitled to. Bro. Holt's infirmities do not lie in that direction. He is evidently one who is well pleased with himself, and has succeeded in convincing himself of his talents, if not others. Such expressions as "successfully routing" us, "sweeping away our darling hobby," "completely vanquishing us," "exposing our glaring sophistry," etc., seem to be in the gentleman's style, though he claims to be "controlled by Divine influence," while, as he asserts, I am not. Allow me to say these boastings remind me of similar expressions he used in his late debate with Rev. Mr. Potter, a part of which I heard. His remarks were interspersed with expressions like these: "Ah! Bro. Potter, you are a beaten man." "You might as well surrender." "Bro. Potter, I have got you now." "You are my prisoner," etc. There may be argument in such talk as this, but if so I am unable to see it.

He tells us he was formerly "almost as successful with a rifle as he now is in opposing infidelity." I wish he had told us just how expert he was with the rifle, and also how many infidels he has completely used up. If he really is a "pretty good shot," I believe I would rather he would practice on me with the "sword of the spirit" which he says is the weapon he now "fights with," than with the rifle of steel and ball of lead.

His statements that he "has, and is willing again to preach and pray without remuneration," I shall take with a few grains of allowance. While he may have a fondness for the occupation, I shall expect him to keep an eye also upon the recompense. If he fails to find it in one location, I think he will seek other "fields and pastures green." Now I do not, for a moment, object to a clergyman's being remunerated for his services by those who employ him, but in speaking of it as an occupation I have only classed it with others which are pursued as a means of livelihood.

With characteristic assurance, the gentleman claims he has completely demolished me in this discussion, and that he is triumphant. For a moment let us review the ground gone over, and see, if we can, *which* has gained the victory.

This discussion grew out of a sermon preached by Mr. Eads upon the efficacy of prayer, wherein the usual Christian arguments were used, and the regular orthodox views maintained—that "the prayers of the just are heard and answered"—that "if we ask in faith we shall receive"—that as a result of prayer the blessings and favors of heaven are dispensed which otherwise would not be granted, etc. This sermon drew out a short article from a gentleman dissenting from these views, which was published in the *Gazette*. To this Mr. Van Deursen responded, further advocating the efficacy of prayer, and claiming also for it great value in healing the sick, which he endeavored to establish by reference to five of our orthodox physicians. This brought out a rejoinder from the gentleman as well as an article from myself taking the opposite ground. Mr. Van Deursen did not respond again, but Mr. Holt valiantly "came to the rescue," and though I have been unable to make out exactly what the gentleman was "driving at" I supposed he intended to occupy the same ground with the other reverend gentlemen and maintain the efficacy of prayer. How stands the question now? The gentleman has completely abandoned the original position, and come over to where I stand, and concedes all I claimed. He now admits that prayer has no effect to change the mind of God or his purposes in the government of mankind. He assents to the doctrines of the authorities I quoted that prayer has no effect in changing the Almighty but only *ourselves*, and says in reference to the same, "*It sounds about right.*" Now this is just the ground I occupied and all I claimed upon the subject, and as the gentleman handsomely yields the point I submit it to all who have paid any attention to this discussion, on which banner victory has perched.

The next question is, will his brethren of the clergy, and his Christian friends generally, abide by the decision he has come to? Will they also admit that prayer cannot change the Almighty or change his dispensations to the human family, and for this purpose possesses no efficacy? If so, the argument is ended, and a long vexed question settled. If the doctrine of the efficacy of prayer is abandoned so must also the belief in Special Providences. If one is given up, so must the other. They go together.

It seems, then, prayer is only a species of *self-culture*—its exercise bringing our minds into suitable conditions, etc. Now I believe in self-culture—in forming good resolutions; in executing good deeds; in restraining improper impulses and all that, but I hold these good results can be better accomplished by a method of self-examination and self-control than by the indirect process of addressing prayers

to an Unseen and Unknown Being, upon whom it is impossible for us to produce any change.

Mr. Holt still sticks to Moses and brings Paul along to establish his good character. I fear, even with Paul's help, he will hardly succeed in making me believe Moses was an immaculate saint, or the "meekest man" that ever lived, as taught by our catechisms in the days of our childhood. In the matter of the massacring, the whole nation of the Midianites—putting all the women and male children to death—and keeping the virgins for the use of the soldiers he passes over as a small matter, and justifies it all by saying the Midianites had given provocation and cites us to the 25th chapter of Numbers for an account of it. It seems the men of the Israelites were too familiar with the women of the Midianites, and that on one occasion one of the Israelites named Zimri brought with him into camp a Midianiteish woman named Cozbi, and they sinned together, whereupon Phineas, the Priest, arose, and, with a javelin, run them both through the body. The crime of Zimri was certainly equal to that of the woman, and the punishment inflicted by the priest must be considered as summary at all events, and that with that the matter should have ended. But no; this was the pretext for putting to death a whole nation of people, including women and children who were entirely innocent of this woman's conduct. If justice, human or Divine, required the death of the whole nation of the Midianites for the offence of one woman, would not also the same justice require the death of all the Israelites for the offence of one man? The punishment was certainly terrible in proportion to the crime, and if one tenth of the cases of adultery since had been punished with the same severity the entire inhabitants of the globe had long since been exterminated.

Mr. Holt seems to think Moses no worse than Washington, Lincoln and Grant, who were also "engaged in the prosecution of war." How is it? Did they cruelly exterminate a whole nation for the offence of one individual? Did they put to death in cold blood scores of thousands of innocent women and sucking infants? Did they turn over at any one time 32,000 captured virgins for the use of their soldiers? I think not. They did nothing of the kind; and in all the annals of history, ancient or modern, it will be difficult to find a character blackened, blood-thirsty and cruel enough to do such deeds, except Moses.

The fact is, Moses was a barbarian. His people were a wild, wandering and barbarous nation. The system of religion he established, consisting much in the slaying and burning of countless numbers of bullocks, rams and he-goats to appease and placate an angry Deity, was fit only for barbarians, and hardly for them.

My belief is that the Universal Father is as much the God of one nation as another—as much the father of the Midianites, Hittites and Jebusites as the Israelites, and all alike were they his creatures. To screen Moses from the just odium of his cruel, tyrannical and blood-thirsty conduct by claiming that he acted by the immediate command of the Almighty is making the matter still worse. I regard it as blasphemous in the extreme to charge such conduct upon the God of Heaven—the Father alike of all nations and people—the beneficent and loving Ruler of the Universe. It is much easier for me to believe Moses acted from his own cruel impulses and that in the account he wrote of it he only *claimed* he acted by Divine authority than to believe for one moment that the loving father of all life would order thousands upon thousands of his helpless children to be massacred by others of his large family. When will divines discontinue charging such conduct upon the Almighty? When will they cease accusing him of being malicious, revengeful, fickle, morose, cruel and unjust? When they drop the barbarian Moses with his odious system of theology and his improbable statements and claims and preach God as he is—Love, Truth, Kindness and Mercy—always the same "without variableness or a shadow of turning."

The creeds of the churches, however, hang so directly upon Moses and his writings that the clergy must needs make him a saint of the "first water"—a leader and law-giver commissioned by heaven to do all the cruel, bloody and murderous deeds he committed. But the time, I think, is coming when Moses, his writings and actions will be regarded by enlightened humanity—Divines as well as others—in their true character and quite different from what has hitherto been held.

Mr. Holt propounds three questions, touching the goodness of Jesus and the honesty and sincerity of his disciples, and claims, if answered in the affirmative, the Christian religion will be established. I have not space here to fully enter into this subject. I am, however, perfectly willing to concede the honesty and sincerity of Jesus and his disciples. But that proves nothing. Sincerity is not a proof of truth. Numerous systems of religion have been

founded, and all in more or less honesty and sincerity. The disciples of Mahomet were sincere. The followers of George Fox, Ann Lee and Joseph Smith were doubtless sincere. The mother who throws her little babe to the crocodiles in the Ganges to appease and satisfy her God is sincere—no higher proof of sincerity could be given. The infatuated devotee who throws himself under the wheels of the car of Juggernaut and is thereby crushed is sincere. No one could question that. But all these are no proof of truth, but only lamentable evidences of the extent to which religious fanaticism and error will carry the human mind. Oh, for the prevalence of truth, light and knowledge throughout the broad earth, when all the dark and blinding effects of superstition, bigotry, priestcraft, and error may be dispelled from the minds of men.

The religion of Jesus is plain and simple, but was so changed and manipulated by those styled "the Early Fathers" and popes and prelates of the Romish Church, many of whom were scheming and designing men—so many pagan notions and dogmas were engrafted into the creed with so much of pomp and display, until now, with all its gorgeous cathedrals, magnificent churches, towering spires, costly organs, crucifixes and paintings, its formal creeds—with its paid choirs—its salaried and often arrogant priesthood and with all its wealth, influence, power, pride, fashion, intolerance and exclusiveness, but little resemblance can be traced between it and the life and teachings of the lowly and wandering Jesus without a home wherein to rest his weary body, or a place to lay his head.

I am well aware, however, I am not on the popular side of this question, and that I would secure a much greater degree of approval from the leaders and the masses by advocating views opposite to those I entertain. But I am not seeking popularity, nor do I expect to run for office. If I am only on the side of Truth and Right, I care for little else. My convictions are honest and decided, and I am disposed to express them with freedom. I have no desire, however, to shock or wound the feelings of any, and if I have said aught amiss I am sorry.

At some future time I may enter more fully into the merits of the subjects here touched upon, but for the present this must suffice. Adieu,

D. B. MORTIMER,

Otherwise

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It ope's a fount of life within,  
And frees the mind from erring sin.  
It lifts the soul on waves of light,  
To learn the truths in shades of night;  
It purifies the stream of life,  
Of all the hells of hate and strife.  
From every source of life below,  
It seeks the truths of God to know;  
And opens wide the way of life,  
To spirit realms above the strife,  
Of errors dark, and dismal hells  
Where vice and sorrow ever dwells.  
It constitutes within the man  
A saving grace, a gospel plan,  
That only truth can make us free,  
And lift above all misery.  
That God in man must be enshrined,  
A power of the human mind—  
Of light and life, of joy and peace,  
That constant seeking must increase;  
To fountains of truth, that ever glow  
A saving grace from earthly woe,  
The more you use them on your way,  
The brighter shines your living day.  
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make mortality immortal, to breathe the spirit of eternity  
with time, to compress all humanity within human limits,  
and to get the full benefits of this life while it lasted. He  
was jealous of the future life; he begrudged every drop of  
feeling that was spilled over the edge of the grave and lost on  
the other side. This world was rich enough for him, and  
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PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY D. M. BENNETT, EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR.

VOL. 1, No. 4.

PARIS, ILL., DECEMBER, 1873.

75 CTS. PER YEAR.

## ANNOUNCEMENT.

This is the last number of THE TRUTH SEEKER that will be issued from Paris, Ill. The January number will be issued from New York City, and will be enlarged to sixteen pages instead of eight.

When we commenced the publication of this little sheet in September last, we did so as an experiment and as a "side issue" being busily engaged in another occupation.

For the first few weeks we received scanty encouragement and we thought the responses of our liberal friends meager in the extreme. We felt much like relinquishing the enterprise and letting it die in early infancy. Prospects, however, improved a little and we decided to go ahead. The improvement held good and increased, and has so continued up to the present time. We are now fully assured that if the friends of "our cause" will continue to add their names to the roll of "TRUTH SEEKERS who read and support this little sheet, our list in a reasonable time will be large enough to make our enterprise a positive success.

Having now relinquished the business in which for the last two years we have been engaged, we propose to give our principal attention to the publication of THE TRUTH SEEKER. It being no longer necessary that we should remain in Paris, and realizing the necessity of being where the paper is printed as well as the fact that this is not the most eligible point for the publication of it that could be selected, we have been casting about to see where we should locate. Several places have been suggested to us. We have been invited to Terre Haute, Toledo, St. Louis, Chicago, Cincinnati and Louisville. We have duly canvassed in our mind the advantages which each presents, and must frankly admit some of these are very desirable points from whence to issue our paper; but, inasmuch as we deem it necessary to make a change at all we wish to make it RIGHT, and have accordingly come to the conclusion that New York is *the place*, believing there our field of usefulness will be greater than anywhere else. It is the metropolis of our country—the great center and headquarters for trade, commerce, interchange for the industries of nations, and why should it not be also for progressive and advanced ideas?

In a radius there of twelve miles, are two and a half millions of people, and in all that host, with the exception of *Woodhull and Claflin's Weekly* there is not a strictly liberal paper published. "*The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few.*" There certainly will be field enough for us.

Our eyes are not shut to the magnitude of the task we are assuming. We are making ourselves very unpopular with the large bulk of our fellow-citizens. Many thousands of pious, self-righteous souls will think us very wicked—the enemy of God and that his thunderbolts ought to strike us from the face of the earth, and for this they will pray. But we understand just how it is; such feelings spring from bigotry, ignorance and superstition, so long as our conscience assures we are right, and we meet the approval of the friends of humanity and the cause of truth, we shall fearlessly pursue

the even tenor of our way, regardless of snarling dogs and growling wolves.

Many considerations would induce us to remain in the West. We like the West—the liberal element is well diffused throughout the Western States, and it would seem a liberal paper like this should be sustained here. But it after all makes but little difference. This little sheet can find its way to every hamlet in the West as easily as from New York as any other point, and that great city presents facilities and advantages we could hardly find elsewhere.

Being a native of the "Empire State" it seems a little like returning home, but we have lived in the West so many years, that we feel decidedly like a true westerner "to the manor born." We shall not forget the great West, nor lose the lively interest we feel in it. We shall keep a warm place in our heart for the grand, noble West, so long as our heart remains warm; and we truly hope the West will not forget us—we crave a small corner in their memory, their interest and good wishes.

We would be glad upon our debut at New York to change THE TRUTH SEEKER from a monthly to a weekly, but prudence whispered to us "be cautious" and we listened to her voice. Our friends have not yet been munificent enough in their subscriptions to warrant the change just yet. The running of a weekly paper is attended with a much heavier expense than our limited means will justify. If the friends of the cause we advocate wish it to become a weekly they can easily make it so. If they will just send in the names of subscribers and swell our list to the proper proportions we will change it to a weekly without delay.

We trust the time is not far distant when this will be done, and when a year has elapsed from the time we commenced, we fully expect our sheet will visit our readers four times a month in place of once.

We presume no apology is necessary for doubling the number of our pages after this issue. We find our space too limited for the matter we wish to lay before our readers. The enlargement is an absolute necessity which we trust none will regret.

Of course the price will have to be in proportion, for the figures at which we are now publishing THE TRUTH SEEKER in its present size is quite as low as can be afforded. When the size is increased, the price will have to be also.

The price of the enlarged TRUTH SEEKER will be one dollar a year; and that every one may obtain the worth of his money, to each subscriber for a year will be mailed as premium, a fifty cent book—an American reprint of a popular English work—entitled

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## PERSONAL.

WE have been a resident of Paris nearly three years and during that time have contracted acquaintances and friendly ties that will not soon be forgotten.

The time passed here has mainly been pleasant to us and it is with sincere feelings of regret we part with many valued friends we have here. We have felt interested in the prosperity of the place and inaugurated an enterprise that carried to completion will prove beneficial to the town. We allude to the business we have been in for the last two years—the growing and vending of Seeds, we have endeavored to faithfully discharge the duties we took upon ourselves in reference thereto. It would have pleased us to carry out the business we commenced, and were so much interested in, but, with the connection we had formed, this was impossible. We trust we part on friendly terms with all save our late partners in the business alluded to. We care not for their friendship and part with them without a pang of regret. We feel that they have cruelly wronged us to the extent of a few thousand dollars and two years hard toil. We trust however, we will be able to survive it. It may be all right. They are the supporters of orthodoxy and expect to go to heaven upon the merits of another person. This may be very fitting in them, for it is the settled opinion of many who know them and in which opinion we fully coincide, that they have not merits enough of their own to be discernible to the common eye, or to be of much practical value.—They are staunch believers in the "Holy Book" and have at least carried out one portion of it with us, we were a stranger and "*they took us in.*"

We trust now we are done with partnerships, we have found them decidedly unsatisfactory and unprofitable. If anyone presents us a petition to Congress, to pass an act making it a penitentiary offence, for two or more men to form a partnership, we think we shall sign it.

For The Truth Seeker.

## NUTS FOR THE CLERGY TO CRACK.

How do you know the Bible is the word of God? If your minister told you so, was he not as interested in deceiving you as you are now interested in deceiving your hearers?

If people should cease to believe that the Bible is the word of God, would not your occupation be gone?

Are you not interested to the amount of your salary in deceiving the people and in keeping them from looking at the evidence on the other side of the question?

If God did really reveal Himself to mankind in the Bible, why do we need to pay you a salary to tell us what it means?

If I do not understand the Bible, is it in any sense a revelation to me?

If I must help to pay you a salary to induce you to tell me what God means in his revelation, am I not at your mercy?

As God sent some people a strong delusion that they should believe a lie, that they might all be damned who believed not the truth. 2 Thessalonians II 11-12,—would it not be right for you to deceive me that I may be damned?

If I do not understand God's word, and you do, have not you the power to deceive me to my injury, and would you not be justified in doing so (if God does so) if I fail to look up to you with proper reverence?

If God ever did put a lying spirit in the mouth of ALL His prophets—1 Kings XXII, 23, and in various other ways deceived the people, how do you know the Bible is not all deception?

Again how do you know that you are not one to whom he has sent a strong delusion in the shape of the Bible that you might believe a lie (the Bible) that you may be damned?

If God has sent any a delusion that they may be damned, what right have you, "a man of God," to try to undeceive them?

If God revealed himself to the ancient in Hebrew and Greek, should not you think he would now reveal himself to us in good plain English language?

If he should do so would it not be necessary for you to go work and earn an honest living?

Will you inform me how it happens that as God pronounced the curse of labor on man—Gen. III, 19, you manage to escape it?

Don't you know that the priesthood in all ages of the world have been a curse to society, drones, non-producers, consumers,—brakes on the car of progress?

Is it not evident that there is some mistake in this matter of revelation from the fact that those who receive the Book as God's word do not agree as to what it means?

If inspired men were needed to write it, are not inspired men needed to explain it, and do we not need to be inspired to comprehend it?

If your parent told you the Bible was the word of God, how did they know it?

If they received their information from their parents were they any better posted than you are or any more capable of proving it?

If you will run this matter back to the first man or men, who started the idea that the Bible was the word of God, will you find that God told them so himself?

If God did tell them so, or if they say he did, must we take their word for it?

If God revealed himself directly to any one, is it any revelation to us who only have their word for it?

Have you any stronger evidence that your Book is God's word than the Hindoos, Persians or Mahomedans have that their books are the word of God?

Is it not possible you are mistaken and they are right?

If, as you often assert, the great age of the Bible is evidence of its inspiration, have not those nations some 2,000 or 3,000 years the advantage of you in that respect?

If age is any evidence of inspiration why do you reject the Apocrypha as the word of God, as it is bound up in your Bible and is equally as old as other parts?

Again, if age is any evidence that the New Testament is the word of God, will it not also prove the writing of Josephus to be the same?

Would not those who wrote the different books of the Bible be as likely to know if they were inspired as you are?

If they did not claim to be inspired, what right have you to do so for them?

As they did not make any such claim, is it not evident that you are trying to humbug the people when you do it?

If I make the claim that I am inspired by God to write these questions, will you accept that claim as evidence that this is the word of God?

If you will not, why should you receive the say of any other man unsupported by proof, as evidence of inspiration?

As it is claimed by the believers in all the different Bibles that their's is the inspired word of God, are you prepared to decide which is and which is not, till you have read them all?

If after reading all of them, you have failed to read the evidence against them, are you capable of coming to a correct conclusion in the matter?

Have you ever read such evidence against your own Book, or have you ever advised any one to do so?

If you know your book is the word of God, why are you afraid to have your hearers read the evidence against your Bible?

Does not the fact that you denounce Infidels and Infidel works prove that you are afraid to have your hearers investigate for themselves?

ATKINSON ILL.

JOHN M. FOLLETT.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

WE cannot forbear the pleasure of laying before our readers a few of the many cheering letters we receive. They may not be as interesting to others as they are to us, but we trust they will not seem dull to any friend of the cause of Truth and Progress.

ISRAEL BETZ, *Oakville, Pa.*, writes: My Dear Sir.—The Sept. and October numbers of "The Truth Seeker" came duly to hand and were perused with much interest. I trust it will prove successful, for it will supply a want heretofore not provided for. You certainly show ability to make a paper interesting and readable. I saw by the Oct. issue you felt somewhat discouraged at the want of support you received. It is not strange, but I hope you will hold on for a year at least. It must prove a success. I sent the numbers you sent me around among my friends and they have given good satisfaction. My Friend H. J. Fosnot, Editor of the *Oakville "Enterprise"* was so much pleased with it that he will notice it in his next issue. I am a reader of "The Index" and "The Investigator."

Enclosed find subscription price and list of names to whom send specimen copies.

CARLOS TEWKSBUURY, *Chelsea, Mass.*, writes:—I have received two numbers of your little sheet—*pure and holy as an angel*. It says "The Liberal Association of Paris." That sounds better than anything we can say in Massachusetts. We do not have such societies here. We have not the enterprise to organize them. The Christians are numerous and they scare us. Pray for us. I have sent your papers on a Missionary tour and have heard from them in third and fourth hands. I think they will be fruitful to you, as you most certainly deserve. Continue to send the papers; the land is well plowed and I will see what I can do for a crop.

DANIEL TUTTLE, *Poplar, O.*, writes:—I am an "old soldier of the cross," being 72 years of age, and for forty years have been battling for the "Rights of Man" in this part of Ohio, almost single-handed and alone against the trained hosts of ignorance, bigotry, prejudice, and every other kind of "infernalism." I am therefore glad to receive your dear, little "Truth Seeker," and I hail it as another orb in the horizon of mental liberty in this our country.

As you say, so I have often come to the same conclusion, that those who call themselves "liberals," are not *liberals*; but too many of them follow the example of the churches, and practice hypocrisy. But I rejoice to think that the dark long past of apathy and stupidity is beginning to wear off and that a brighter day is dawning. I have been discouraged a hundred times, but have kept on at work in my humble way and now have the satisfaction of seeing the right kind of fruit growing east, west, north, and south in glorious abundance. So then, don't be discouraged, for with such a sheet as "The Truth Seeker" you must and will prevail. If I was rich I would send you much more than fifty cents. I will try and get up a club if possible, but stupidity and indifference are the greatest sins of liberals. For them there is no hell to frighten them; and they never expect any of the "gold" in the streets of "New Jerusalem;" or the embraces of Jesus, or the "Crown of Gold in the skies;" and they care nothing for Thrones, Kingdoms, Monarchs or King. Oh, I wish I could throw a few bolts of convincing thunder into the ears of such men and women and arouse them from their *lethargy, apathy, stupidity*, and I may add, too, *penuriousness*.

DR. J. H. RHODES, *Philadelphia*, writes:—Nos. 1 and 2 of "The Truth Seeker" are before me and I am well pleased with their appearance and style. May God and the angels aid and assist you to make it a success, for we need a cheap, good, liberal paper—one which is not given to low, vulgar language or to sensational stories. One whose editor will not preach one way and practice another and thus miss the good influence which should be felt by those to whom it is addressed. You may send me one dollar worth each month by mail, and I will introduce the paper here to the best of my ability and remit to you on receipt of the papers.

Mrs. J. N. DAVIS, *Princeton, Ill.*, writes thus: I am in possession of the second number of your most excellent paper and feel much obliged for your kindness in placing before me such a *perfect gem of truth*. I like "The Truth Seeker"—it takes me back to my childhood's home, for it teaches just what my good, kind Father did, when it was considered criminal for Thomas Paine's works to be found in the possession of any one. But he dared to read them and teach them, together with the Rev. Robt. Taylor's, \* \* \* \* \*

Do not be discouraged—be patient and trustful. The clouds that now darken the horizon will all fade away and the beautiful sunshine as of an auroral morn will pour in upon you. "Don't give up the ship," for bright and shining as its top-sail is, it can and will attract attention.

MATTHEW ROMER, *Titusville, Pa.*, writes:—The copies of "The Truth Seeker," are received and upon perusing their columns I have decided that the paper is just what is needed and ought to be in every household in America, but as that cannot be,—it ought certainly to be in every liberal-minded man's family. It is very instructive and ably conducted. I was surprised to find such strong radical ideas in so small a sheet. But it is the right way. I admire your "Platform." I shall have a copy every month in my household and herein enclose the subscription price. \* \* \* \* \*

I have but a short time been an unbeliever. It is but two or three years since I came across any "liberal writings."—I was brought up in a Catholic Orphan Asylum from my fourth year until I was thirteen. My mind was clogged with their Theology and ignorance of which I probably can never wholly rid myself, no matter how I try. The effects of early education are not easily removed. But you will admit, all things considered, I have done well to place myself among the Infidels. I feel as Garibaldi said not very long ago, "were the Devil to raise an army to fight against priests and priestcraft, I would be one of the first to offer my services." My greatest wish is to see your paper prosper, and I will put my shoulder to the wheel and render all the aid I can to so really good, instructive and worthy a journal.

ADIN GAUNTT, *Chagrin Falls, Ohio*, writes: "I hope you will succeed in your undertaking for we need more truth on every subject, I presume than we shall be able to get in this generation. Enclosed please find subscription price. I will try and get you more subscribers as soon as I can take a little time."

CHAS. D. SMITH, *Goshen, N. Y.*, writes: "Mr. J. F. Ruggles kindly sent me the first number of your paper, of which I think highly, Mildness with firmness is our plan. If you will send me a few copies, I will try and get you some subscribers here."

L. P. BRIGHAM, *Tolono, Ill.*, says: "I accidentally saw a copy of your little paper, and immediately concluded to invest 50 cents; then I told a friend to do likewise. Enclosed find the dollar. If you will send me a few copies, I will try and get you more subscribers. I don't want any pay for my work, as I am willing to do what little I can for the glory of the cause. I read your first number and like it very much, and I hope it will be a grand success. "Chalk" me down as a constant subscriber, and an earnest sympathizer in the cause of liberty."

MARY S. KING, *New York Mills, N. Y.*, writes: "Your little paper is at hand, and perused with great pleasure. Enclosed find fifty cents for it one year, also the names of several liberal minded persons of my acquaintance."

P. V. WINN, *St. Joseph, Mo.*, says: "You will please send me the "Truth Seeker" one year. I have received the first number and like it very much. We must unite and fight the Evangelicals with a bold front, or they will have their ropes around our necks soon."

S. WEST, *Bushnell, Ill.*, writes: I have received two numbers of your paper, and am much pleased to see them. Glad of one more spark of light to make manifest more truth, more light, and more reason upon the subject, to which it is devoted—subjects, than which none are more interesting to our happiness here, and certainly cannot militate against our happiness hereafter, if there is one for us. It is a strange doctrine to teach, that our enlarged knowledge here, will prevent or curtail our happiness hereafter. Enclosed is one dollar for two copies. Will send more soon."

T. B. JOHNSON, *Sterling, Iowa*, aged 72, writes thus: "I am rather dillitory in not sending you names as prompt as I get them? I got the two annexed last Saturday after I had posted you a letter, and I intended to go around and get you a few more. But the snow lies eight inches deep, and I being lame and an invalid, I cannot get around. It seems to me an easy matter to get subscribers as I have got you 14 and only 3 have refused, and if all will try, I think they can make you "pull of your coat and roll up your sleeves" and go to work. So I hope you will go ahead and show a firm but modest front. Yours for the truth, T. B. Johnson."

WM. NELSON, *Davenport, Iowa*, says: "The first two numbers of your sprightly, clean, liberal little sheet are received. Will do all I can for your prosperity and success."

JOHN WOOLSTENHOLM, *Lancaster, Wis.*, writes: "Enclosed I send you the name of another subscriber, making five I have sent you. I will still do all I can. In your last issue I suppose you were somewhat discouraged. I dare not think for a moment you should fail in the noble cause you have undertaken to defend. I believe there are liberals enough to make it a success. If not I shall be most sorely disappointed. Let us fight for the cause that has a reality and life, though every "ism" fails."

S. M. DOLE, *Blissfield, Mich.*, writes: "Let hope feed you. Think die, never. I want you to live; for the whole country is dying for the want of you. Take the offensive. Your place is at the front. Work and starve, that our country may survive and call you blessed."

DAVID BARRITT, *Whitehall, N. Y.*, says: "I have received two of your papers and feel very thankful to know there is such a sheet in these United States to back up the "old Boston Investigator." I have taken that paper since 1844. I also want "The Truth Seeker." Enclosed please find post-office order for five dollars, for which please send to the ten names annexed. You will excuse my writing, for I am seventy-five years old."

J. N. MOORE, *Lowell, Mass.*, writes thus: "For the benefit of the cause which you espouse, I send a subscription for one year for the "Truth Seeker." I have read the 1st and 2d numbers, and they seem to have the right ring in them. Although I take other liberal papers, I have a desire that your little sheet, for the cause of free thought shall be a success, and to help it along in its infancy, I send you the above. This city is such a "cursed" Christian place, and the Liberals are so unorganized, that it is almost impossible to get a subscriber for your paper. Whether others are doing anything for you or not, I am unable to say. We maintain no organization here, consequently we are at the mercy of our Christian enemies. May all such "seekers" find the truth, and wishing you success, I am, yours for universal mental liberty."

ARETAS STANTON, *Breakabeen, N. Y.*, says: "I have received samples of the "Truth Seeker," and like the paper, and fully approve of your objects and aims. I heartily wish you success. I have handed the paper to friends for examination, and have succeeded in getting four names of parties who want the paper, and will be able to get more."

NELSON POTTER, *Anawson Iowa*, says: "Your paper suits me to a "T," and I will do all I can to help it along. Send me specimen copies, and I will send them where they will do good."

HENRY W. BACK, *New Albany, Ind.*, writes: "For the 10 cents enclosed, send me your paper—the best thing I have seen. I will do all I can for you."

WM. SEVILLE, *same place*, says: "I herewith send you three additional subscribers, and hope to send you more shortly. I wish much success to your enterprise."

For want of room we are compelled to omit many other letters we would be glad to insert.



From Saturday Evening Mail, Nov. 1.

## THE TRUTH SEEKER.

There is at the present time a very manifest tendency towards liberalism in matters of religion—in fact to a liberalism which amounts to infidelity.—Some of the greatest scientific men of the age, as Spencer, Tyndall, Huxley, Darwin, make no concealment of their skepticism, but openly teach it in their writings, while a large number of literary people covertly show that the old orthodox doctrines have ceased to hold sway over their minds. It is folly for the Christian world to try to conceal this state of things, for it is too patent for concealment. The shrewder minds of the church prefer to admit the facts in their broadest proportions and oppose them openly and above board. Not so all. To some minds the acknowledgment that infidelity is on the increase is tantamount to the acknowledgment that Christianity is on the decline, and the bare suggestion of such an idea amounts to heresy.

During the past few months a series of articles on modern skepticism have appeared in one of the leading magazines of the country, in which the writer set forth a full and free statement of the condition of religious thought, as he had gathered it from a careful study of current science and literature, at the same time giving his views as to the most effective method of treatment. These articles drew forth much comment and a very influential religious weekly took the magazine to task for allowing them to enter its columns, asserting that such utterances were calculated to do more harm than even the writings of professed skeptics. Without entering into the merits of the controversy we have cited the case merely as an illustration (if any were needed) of the truth of our statement—that there is a strong current running in the direction of religious liberalism.

This tendency of the times manifests itself in the organization of "liberal" and "radical clubs" and in the increase of publications devoted to the promulgation of the doctrines of skepticism. The second number of such a paper has just come into our hands—"The Truth Seeker," published by the Liberal Association of Paris, Ill. Having a considerable infusion of the liberal spirit in our constitution, we set about examining "The Truth Seeker" with a great deal of interest, and being thoroughly convinced that there is nothing so good for the truth as agitation, we determined to fill our allotted column of The Mail with the results of this examination.

There are some things about "The Truth Seeker" which we like and some which we don't like. We like its plainness, its fearlessness and its sincerity.—It evidently means to be understood—what it has to say it says in the plainest words it can find. It is not afraid. Every line of it bristles with courage. One cannot well doubt its honesty. There would be little motive for the Liberal Association to publish such unpopular utterances other than a sincere desire to advance the cause of Truth. Yet with all these admirable qualities it strikes us that "The Truth Seeker" is not just what its name would indicate; that although published by professed "Liberals" it is to some extent disfigured by illiberality; that instead of a *truth seeker* it is a *preacher* of preconceived opinions. We will try to explain what we mean.

On the first page of the paper we find an article entitled "Our Platform," the opening sentences of which are as follows:

We extend the right hand of fellow-ship to liberal minds of all grades and classes. We ask them not to adopt our special views and opinions—to see with our eyes or to understand with our reason. We are not "hide-bound," nor do we ask others "to measure their wheat in our half-bushel." We embrace as in one brotherhood, Liberals, Free Religiousists, Rationalists, Spiritualists, Universalists, Unitarians, Friends, Infidels, Free Thinkers, and in short all who dare to think and judge for themselves.

Nothing is said of orthodox Christians. They are left out of the account entirely. Are we then to conclude that there are no "liberal minds" among the memberships of the orthodox churches—none who "dare to think and judge for themselves"? Is it liberal for "The Truth Seeker" to make such an assertion? We confess that our liberalism would have gone a step further and included the liberal minds of all denominations and sects.

This is the first hint of liberalism. We find others. In Mr. Bennett's editorial article on "The Bible," is this sentence: "We wish not to offend or wound the feelings of any sincere though deluded persons, whose regard for the book is so much greater than our own." Why *deluded*? Is this just the epithet for a candid seeker after the truth to apply to all those whose views differ from his own? Mr. Bennett's editorial is really an able and careful *lie*; but his arguments are hardly so conclusive as But I warrant him in coolly pronouncing all who besprike in the bible to be "deluded." This is rather a dogmatic way of seeking the truth. Mr. Bennett should not call his paper "The Truth Seeker" if he

has already found all the truth; and until he has done so he can ill afford to use epithets which are calculated to hurt those whom it is his purpose to convert. Farther on he says: "The Shaster, the Vedas, the Pymander, the Koran and the sacred writings of other nations are equal in point of excellence, virtue and beauty to the Bible." Concerning the three first we are not prepared to speak, but anyone who has read the Koran must have been convinced that it is a mere *plagiarism* of the Bible and in no manner worthy to be compared with it. The statement of Mr. Bennett carries the appearance of a desire to conceal the truth, rather than to seek it. Further on in the same article, speaking of the ministry of the church he says: "For the services they render—for doing the thinking for the masses, for appealing to Heaven in their behalf, and revealing to them what the will of Heaven is, the priesthood claim the right to the fat of the land; the best of the flocks; the veneration and obedience of those whom they rule over—with perfect immunity from physical labor and toil. Is this always to continue? Is man always to be led and controlled by such guides!"

Now we ask all candid and fair minded people whether the above sentiments are such as we have a right to expect from a sincere and sober truth-seeker? Is it just the thing to taunt the clergy with their exemption from physical toil? Is not the same true of other classes of the world's best workers—literary men and lawyers, for instance?—Is there no legitimate toil but *physical* toil? We do not say there are no shirks in the pulpit—there are doubtless many. But there are also in the ministry many honest, able, devoted and toiling men who earn all that they receive and much more; but "The Truth Seeker" includes them in its sweeping condemnation.

It strikes us that the first duty of a "liberal" is to be liberal and we confess to having been pained many a time by the narrow and uncharitable views of those who were preaching the gospel of liberalism. We are heart and soul with the liberal movement, with the effort to banish narrow creeds and dogmas and to discover the *truth*, "whatever it may be and wherever it may lead;" but if any real good is to be accomplished, any practical advance made, the utmost fairness and candor must characterize our discussions.

REMARKS.—We thank our friend of THE MAIL, for the above notice. In the main it is fair and candid but we think our critic is slightly hypercritical. Because the title of our paper is THE TRUTH SEEKER he seems to think we need not presume to state the truth we have found. With as much propriety might we claim that as the title of his paper is THE MAIL it ought to be printed in the Post Office and should have no connection with an EXPRESS office. Cannot a person seek and teach at the same time? Is there anything more common than for a teacher while guiding young minds in the study of rudimentary knowledge to be himself searching after truth in the more advanced branches? Is there any thing wrong about it? And are not such teachers as strive to improve their own knowledge really the best teachers? He complains also because our platform is not expansive enough and does not take in the orthodox churches. After naming the liberal and semi-liberal classes we say, "in short ALL who dare to think and judge for themselves." Is not that tolerably comprehensive and does it shut out any member of an orthodox church who exercises the liberty of *thinking for himself*?

He complains also because we use the adjective *deluded* in connection with those who implicitly believe the Bible; tho' we admit they may be honest. We cannot think it is a very harsh epithet. It implies no guilt. The best disposed person in the world may be deluded upon some points. If we can show the Bible is not the "word of God" (and we believe we can) there can be no great wrong in styling the believers of it *deluded*.

He complains of us also because we allude to the clergy as being exempt from physical toil and having in abundance the good things of the earth. We fear we shall continue to give offence in this direction and often feel impelled to allude to them as an unproducing class who add nothing to the wealth or productions of the world and whose main source of livelihood consists in sustaining by their labors the errors and absurdities of an ancient and effete system of theology.

As to the Koran we distinctly wish it understood we are no advocate of it. It is doubtless true, it is of later date than the "Jewish Bible" and may be to some extent a "plagiarism of it" even as the Jewish Bible is of later date and a plagiarism of the bibles of India, which fact we shall endeavor to show in future numbers of THE TRUTH SEEKER.

We have no copy of the Koran by us, but we will give a few quotations from it and let our readers judge whether it is any manner "worthy of being compared" with the Jewish Scriptures:

"A kind speech and forgiveness are better than alms which harm or reproach followeth."

"Give the orphans when they come of age their substance and render them not in exchange bad for good, and devour not their substance by adding it to your own; for this is a great sin."

"Those who believe and do what is right, we will bring into gardens watered by rivers; therein shall they remain forever."

"Show kindness unto your parents, whether the one or both of them attain to old age with thee; speak respectfully unto them and submit to behave humbly toward them, out of tender affection."

"Give unto him who is of kin to you his due, and also to the poor and the traveler; and waste not thy substance profusely. Let not thy hand be tied up to thy neck; neither open it with an unbounded expansion, lest thou become worthy of reprehension and be reduced to poverty."

"Meddle not with the substance of the orphan, unless it be to improve it. Perform your covenant; and give full measure, when you measure aught and weigh with a just balance."

"Let not men laugh each other to scorn, who peradventure may be better than themselves; neither let women laugh other women to scorn, who possibly may be better than themselves. Neither defame one another; nor call one another by opprobrious epithets."

"Consume not your wealth among yourselves in vain; nor present it to judges that ye may devour part of men's substance unjustly."

Would that all our Bible was equal to these extracts in point of truth, purity and morality. If so, it would be far less reprehensible than it is.

We hope our friend of the MAIL will continue to read THE TRUTH SEEKER without being too exacting or hypercritical with us. We will be glad to hear from him again.—[ED. TRUTH SEEKER.]

## LETTER FROM JOHN SYPHERS.

DEAR EDITOR TRUTH SEEKER:—I am O, so glad that you are able at last to assure us that your brilliant little truth teller will live and continue to visit us for one year at least. I could not get away from home and consequently have not done much for you as yet in the way of procuring subscribers, but now I am differently situated and will try and do something for you. Your discussion of prayer as a *therapeutic agent* is both laughable, amusing, and very instructive. I guess Brother Holt will not care to tackle you soon again, neither on prayer nor any other subject. I see that Bro. Holt has got it, as I used to used to have it, when I was howling Campbellism upon every stump and from every pulpit that I could get into. Has got what, you ask? Got the big head, as they all have, and that the very worst way. They are even so blind and bigoted as to think that they are not a sect, but the church of Christ!

'Tis laughable. If Alexander Campbell had never lived, the Campbellite sect with its sacred Hydraulics and Hydropathic salvation would never have been heard of—I knew Alexander C. well. I used to be with him at his meetings and have oft taken salt at his table, and thought like all the rest of the Campbellites that He was the greatest man that ever lived since the days of the Apostles. But I found out eventually that it takes great men to make great mistakes. His system of religion was decidedly Hydropathic and when he looked into the Bible it seemed to me he was looking into an ocean of water. He could see nothing but water. It was laughable to see how he could take up any passage of Scripture at random, yes even the most kiln-dried passages to be found in the book, and by the time he would give them a theological wring or two, you could plainly see the water begin to come. He held on with a death-grip to old material, external ordinances. But the world has now grown out of all material ordinances in its spiritual development, and any church that builds upon them must and will play out and be left gloriously out of sight in the coming times.

Material ordinances, such as baptism, bread, wine &c., have a tendency to deaden and materialize the

mind instead of spiritualizing it. Poor old Alexander, used to take great pains to teach us that baptism by immersion was a *change of state*, but when I began to get my eyes open, and to grow a little in reason, spiritually and good common sense, I soon became sharp enough to see that the only change of state involved in baptism was a change from a dry state to a wet one!

I believe that I never told you that I am writing a book entitled, "A Punch into the Great Religious Hornet's Nest of the World, by One Who is Not Afraid of Being Stung." I am also going to start a paper to be called

"THE LITTLE HERETIC."

They will both be out next summer. As it will be an *immortal* paper, and an *immortal* book—published by the *immortal* John Syphers, I will therefore charge for each of them "*the immortal dollar*."

All who think they would like to take them, either one or both, will please send postal card to me, stating the same, at Streator, Ill.

Yours for stirring up things,

JOHN SYPHERS.

We wish to hereby duly notify Brother Syphers that we will at all events take a copy each of "The Punch" and "The Little Heretic." We shall hail with pleasure the advent of each, for the country can hardly have too much of such literature, and we know whatever comes from our good Brother's pen will be "rare, rich and racy." We hope every one of our readers will send in his notice giving due information that he will take a copy of each.

We think we can ourselves dispose of several hundred copies of "The Punch."—[Ed. Truth Seeker.]

## THE TRUTH SEEKER;

D. M. BENNETT, EDITOR.

PARIS, ILLINOIS.

### THE BIBLE.—No. 3.

If a critical examination is made of the account of creation given in the book of Genesis, it must strike every candid, enquiring mind that there is great imperfection in the statements there given, and a great want of harmony between those statements and the truths of science taught by astronomy, and geology.

Upon this Bible account of creation is based the fabric of the Jewish and the Christian Religions. It is recognized and endorsed by Moses and other writers of the Old Testament, and by Paul and other writers of the New Testament. Upon it is founded the entire system of the theology of the Christian world, and the plan of salvation of the human race.

If then the base of the structure is defective and false—if it is upon such a sandy or *mirey* foundation that it cannot stand, the edifice must inevitably come to the ground.

God is not the author of falsehood. His works and utterances are replete with truth and perfection.

If He is the author of the universe and all existences. He is also the author of the sciences, which are the most palpable truths known to the world, and have been the greatest and most unerring instructors with which mankind have been blessed. In fact we hold the sciences are among the most divine elements of which humanity has any knowledge or conception. In a word, THE TRUE GOD IS THE GOD OF SCIENCE.

If then, God is the author of the Universe, and the author of Science, and should vouchsafe to His creatures an account of the creation, that account must not only be replete with truth, but must also be in perfect unison with science. He Himself inaugurated. Whatever account cannot come up to this standard, must be set down as false, and not proceeding from God, directly or indirectly.

How is it with the Bible account of the creation? Does it come up to this standard? We think not, but falls lamentably short in every particular. It is claimed this account was written by Moses who was inspired by God.

We know not upon what authority this claim is set up. The story nowhere bears his imprint. He nowhere asserts he was the author of it. No writer of the Old Testament asserts it. No writer of the New Testament as-

serts it; and if they did it could be with no knowledge of its truthfulness, as they had no better means of knowing the author than we have.

It is not very material to us who the author was, but our entire ignorance of the matter only proves how unsafe it is to attach any special importance to it or to yield our assent that it is an emanation from Deity.

It was, of course written by *some* human being and by one, too, who was not present when the events are supposed to have occurred which he attempts to narrate; for no mortal was there, and not one was in existence.

The writer then must simply have drawn upon his imagination for the statements he makes, or merely repeated the legends and traditions handed down from his forefathers. God could not have dictated such a story, for it is untrue and in direct contradiction of himself as we have seen and will further aim to show.

Science has taught us the truth, of which every schoolboy is fully cognizant, that the earth is a sphere or globe, revolving in space once in every twenty-four hours upon its own axis and around its center and parent, the sun, in three hundred and sixty-five days, thus causing day and night and summer and winter.

Did the author of the book of Genesis understand these simple truths? Not at all.

It is now equally as well known that this world we inhabit, compared with other suns and worlds without number that revolve in space, is very small and of an inferior character—a mere drop as compared with the ocean. It is known of these starry worlds that they belong in systems, and constellations that revolve and inter-revolve, coursing thro' the heavens around some grand, far-distant centre perpetually and forever, never for a moment remaining in a state of rest. Did the person who wrote the book of Genesis have the slightest conception of these things and of the magnitude, number and immense distance of these glorious worlds on high, some visible and many more invisible to our vision? Was he in fact, competent to impart any true information concerning them? No! No!

It is well known by geologists and scientific men that the earth, including the rocks and mineral ores was once in a perfectly fused or molten state and so must have continued for immense eras—probably millions of years, but in time, after the lapse of ages, the surface slowly cooled down and crusted over, the rocks becoming solid, and by the action of water, the air and other causes, slowly triturated and pulverized until *soil* was produced.

That the earth is still in a state of great heat is abundantly proved by the internal fires which produce volcanoes—great numbers of which have existed and many of which still remain; as well as by the increased heat found as we descend towards the center of the earth; also by the existence of numerous hot springs in various parts of the world where boiling water rushes out in great quantities, showing conclusively it comes from a heated locality. Did the author of Genesis know anything of all this?

As the account shows not the slightest train of information of this kind, is it not puerile and even blasphemous to insist that God dictated this account or that he had anything to do with it? If God is the author of nature and all its laws, forces and conditions, would he not be likely to understand all about them, and being also the author of truth, would he authorize a statement wholly at variance with truth and science?

Sensible people must inevitably come to the conclusion that the Bible account of the creation is a mere tissue of blunders, errors and falsehoods, and is wholly unworthy the credence and veneration which the ignorant and superstitious accord to it and which is enjoined and enforced by a designing, interested class of men called priests, whose livelihood is secured by keeping the masses under their

control and by perpetuating the fallacies and absurdities of bygone ages. The story presents inherent evidence that it was not the production of one person. There is not a unity of style nor a unity of statement. The first chapter and three verses of the second, is by one author, and the remainder by another. They do not agree and present discrepancies of so grave a character that it seems most singular how people of intelligence in this nineteenth century can look upon the narrative as the word of God and think it should have credence in preference to the teachings of science and truth.

The account in all probability is a legend handed down from ages long past, and from a nationality much more ancient than the Jews, and by the compilers of the Bible, made up of the writings of persons known and unknown, was incorporated into the collection and placed at the head; and the Christian world for hundreds of years, have been regarding it with a blind veneration it is wholly unworthy of, believing it to be a direct emanation from the Divine mind.

We cannot, in this article take up the narrative and examine it in detail, for we are admonished to be brief. We have been absent a week on a visit to eastern cities, and our printers, from manuscript left with them have matter already in type more than the columns of our sheet will contain.

The January number will have sixteen pages in place of eight, thereby affording a greater amount of room. We will then resume this subject and will endeavor to further show that the Bible account of creation is so full of inaccuracies and absurdities as to no longer merit the respect, much less the veneration and adoration of intelligent, thinking people.

### OUR RESPONSIBILITY.

It of course must be understood by our readers that we cannot be responsible for any views or opinions that may be advanced by our correspondents. Our columns being free to the pro and con of almost every subject we cannot be answerable for the views which a friend may take on any subject he chooses to give his attention to.

In the October Number of THE TRUTH SEEKER we gave space to an article which seems to have given displeasure to quite a number of our readers, and some seem to think we should not have published it.

The article was entitled "Common Cause" and was not as cordial to our spiritualistic friends as perhaps it should have been, viewing them as the antipodes of materialists proper.

By way of explanation of our position we will say THE TRUTH SEEKER was not started distinctively as a spiritualistic paper, though we are not in the slightest degree antagonistic to them, we regard them as brothers and co-laborers in the great cause of human progress, mental liberty and perfect freedom from the bondage and fetters of priestcraft and superstition.

We take this opportunity of acknowledging the immense service spiritualists have rendered in advancing liberalism and free thought. In zeal, organization and real effort we must admit they are doing more to check the power of sectarianism and Christian Mythology than any other element in our land.

True, we have several warm and determined Liberals who are devoting their time and abilities in the spread of light and truth, and foremost among them is the champion B. F. Underwood—a Materialist of unquestioned ability, and he most cheerfully gives the Spiritualists full credit for the immense good they have done and are doing in the warfare in favor of mental liberty.

We are not exacting as to what others may believe as to a future world. We certainly have no objection to an existence beyond the grave and we entertain some hopes that such a boon may be in store for us.

We advocate a liberal latitude in favor of free views and unfettered opinions. If our friends think they have sufficient grounds to believe in the immortality of the soul, we can certainly urge no objection against the full exercise of such belief. If on the other hand there are others who fail to see any proof of a man's living after he is dead, and deny there is any ground for believing the mind exists independent of the body we shall not quarrel with them. There are great numbers holding to each of these views, and who meet on the common ground of liberalism and free thought and jointly oppose the rule of oppression and mental gloom which priests have exercised and bound upon their dupes hundreds of years.

Here we stand; and we say to ALL who can unite with us, *let us work in unison; let us co-operate in every practical way we can to promote the welfare of the human race and to oppose the cruel oppression of the priesthood and the church.* Let us be careful, while we oppose bigotry in our opponents that we do not unconsciously cherish it in our own breasts,

### SHALL LIBERALS ORGANIZE?

To this conundrum we emphatically answer YES. We believe in *life and action*. What if we are freed from the fears of hell and the devil and do not expect to wear crowns of glittering diamonds nor to be enriched by the gold in the streets of the New Jerusalem? This is no reason why we should not have some good feeling towards our fellow creatures and feel anxious that they should also share in the gladness which fills our hearts. We know we have found the TRUTH. We are fully convinced we are fighting the greatest foes to the human race—bigotry, superstition and priestcraft, and that they must ultimately succumb and go by the board, but let us do all we can to hasten the glad day. If we have a good thing, let us be anxious to share it with our fellow beings who are not so fortunate as we are. Let us be willing to work and to spend a little money in the good cause. Let us not fold our hands nor stick them into our pockets, grasping our purses, as death is said to grip a dead African. Let us spread the good news we have heard, let us circulate liberal books and papers; let us encourage and support liberal lecturers, let us freely spend a few dollars every year in the cause of mental freedom and true philanthropy.

We shall live quite as long and more happily by thus using a moiety of our means—say ten dollars a year (and many can do much more) in aiding that which tends to the advancement of humanity than in a life of apathy and indifference.

Let us learn from our opponents. If we will all go to work with the same zeal they do, the number of liberals in the United States may be doubled by the close of 1874.

Let us look up those searching after truth and lead them to it; let us seek for those who are trying to emerge from the darkness of past ages, and direct them to the light. *Let us work, LET US ORGANIZE!*

In every community where there are a dozen liberal-minded persons, including spiritualists and materialists, or even half that number, let them organize and meet together stately—once a week, once in two weeks or at farthest, once a month; and if no speaker can be had, read some good, sound, liberal publication that will shed light and earnestness upon those present. Invite in such as are willing to hear genuine truth. This will cost but little and will be the means of doing very much good. In unity of effort great results are accomplished.

The besetting sin of Liberalism is apathy, lifelessness and indifference. We would that we could infuse into them new zeal, new motives and new energy. We would not stop nor rest until the work was accomplished.

We are not preaching without practicing as well. All that we have, and our life even, have we devoted to the good cause

we have at heart. Our strength, and whatever of ability we possess, shall be given to the furtherance of the work of human progression. We shall fearlessly hold up to the view of the world the errors and wrongs of the dark ages of the past. We will "cry aloud and spare not." We will "lift up our voice like a trumpet, and show the people the transgressions" of those who seek to enslave them. We know we shall have thousands to join us and help us. Let us then work in concert. Let us not seek to evade our portion of the work to be performed. Let us move on like a victorious army; our efforts then shall be successful and none can "make us afraid."

### OUR OBJECTS AND AIMS.

We wish it to be understood that we are not only an advocate of free thought in matters of theology and religion, but are in favor of all that tends to elevate the masses of our fellow beings—to free them from the bondage of oppressors and taskmasters that either debase the body or enslave the mind. We favor free schools in the strictest sense of the term—free from sectarianism and cant. We favor the interests of labor and oppose undue oppression of capital. We oppose monopoly and centralization. We favor the equality of the sexes before the law, yielding to women all rights and privileges accorded to men.

We favor reform in the marriage relation, not by doing away with marriage, but by divesting it of the wrongs with which it is attended. We regard marriage between man and woman as a civil contract, solely, the same as a partnership arrangement between two men. We would educate the young of both sexes in the sciences that will enable them to choose a suitable companion for life. After marriage we would say to them, expect not perfection in your mates; look leniently upon their faults and be not too exacting, strive to render yourselves agreeable and promote each others happiness. Be true and faithful to each other and be slow to give or take offence. If however, in spite of all this, persons find themselves unhappily mated and that they cannot possibly live pleasantly together (and unfortunately there are thousands of this kind of marriages) we would afford them the same facilities for separating they had in being united and with as little disgrace or discredit to either party. We would not compel persons to remain together who cannot do so agreeably—believing it a bondage more cruel than the grave.

We entertain a high regard for the ties of home, of husband and wife, of parents and children, brother and sister, deeming them the most sacred ties known to the human heart; and we would preserve them inviolate. This we believe can be done more effectually by the monogamic system of marriage than any other.

In the social relations of society we are aware there are many serious ills grievous to be borne but we fail to see that the remedy lies in annulling the monogamic system of matrimony or in encouraging promiscuity or unrestrained license. More on these subjects in the future.

This number of THE TRUTH SEEKER will be sent to many persons who are not subscribers, but whose names we are anxious to add to our list. Those who approve the object we have in view and our manner of treating subjects, will please encourage us with their names and the small amount we ask for the paper.

It is hoped friends of the cause will one and all make an effort to increase the circulation of THE TRUTH SEEKER by calling attention to and recommending it to their acquaintances who are lovers or seekers of truth.

After the present number, THE TRUTH SEEKER will be stitched (or gummed) and trimmed thus making it convenient for the reader. We trust this feature will be appreciated.

It is our object and interest to make THE TRUTH SEEKER an acceptable, *First-class* liberal Paper. All we ask in return is a *first-class* appreciation and a *first-class* subscription list.

We cannot expect to draw anything from the earnings of THE TRUTH SEEKER for a year. If it pays its own way during that time it will do well. In the mean time to "keep the wolf from the door" we propose in connexion to conduct A LIBERAL ADVERTISING AGENCY, making contracts for advertisements in the following periodicals:

The Index; Boston Investigator; Religio Philosophical Journal; Liberal Christian; Old and New; Herald of Health; The Lyceum; Weekly Farmer.

We have such arrangements that we can contract at the best prices of the various papers named.

We will also be quite willing to take a few advertisements for THE TRUTH SEEKER.

Will our friends in various parts of the country, who wish to reach a reading and thinking portion of the public, please govern themselves accordingly.

Our removing to New York and doubling the size of the paper will inevitably subject us to greatly increased expenses. We call upon our friends and the liberal public to "help us out" by swelling our subscription list. Let every liberal-minded person in the country feel a special interest in our behalf and send us all the subscribers they can.

Remember the price of THE TRUTH SEEKER is 75 cents per year commencing with No. 1 and including the first four numbers of eight pages each. If commencing at No. 5 for January (16 pages) or any subsequent number \$1.00. A Premium of a 50 cent Book is also mailed to each subscriber. There is not a cheaper and we trust not a better paper in the country.

We ask the attention of readers to the advertisement of THE LITTLE BOUQUET on the 8th page.

It is an admirable illustrated paper for young folks and well calculated to impart information and interest to this class of readers without burdening them with the useless trash which works of bigotry and superstition contains. Price \$1.50 per year. Published by S. S. Jones, Chicago.

We would inform our Readers that G. B. Stebbins, Esq., of Detroit, Mich., is prepared to answer calls of those needing first class lecturers. His ability is well-known and his advanced position in the field of Free Thought and Mental Progress is well understood. Those who engage his services are sure to be pleased. Give him a call.

Those who have money to place at interest at 12 per cent. on real estate securities are referred to the advertisements of G. L. Henderson & Co. on 8th page. They are reliable, first-class men, giving the best of references. Any business entrusted to them will be attended to with promptness and fidelity.

### BOOK NOTICES.

WE are in receipt of a copy of Stebbins' BIBLE OF THE AGES which the compiler and publisher kindly sends us—a fine volume of 400 pages. It consists of chapters and extracts from the Bibles and Sacred Writings of the Buddhists, Brahmans, Hindoos, Persians, Chinese, Egyptians, Grecians, Romans, Hebrews and Arabians. It is made up of choicest selections from the Vedas, Zend Avesta, Pyramider, Old Testament, Talmud, Koran, Eddas and many other works. It contains the best expressions and finest sentiments from Orpheus, Pythagoras, Cleanthes, Aristotle, Plato, Marcus Aurelius, Epictetus, Seneca, Jesus, Paul, Justin Martyr, St. Augustine, Kempis, Luther, Goethe, Humboldt, Swedenborg and very many distinguished Authors of more modern date. It is truly a most valuable book and ought to be in the possession of every person in the country. Price \$1.50 Postage 25 cents. Address Giles B. Stebbins, Detroit, Mich.

"VIVID TRUTHS."—A closely printed pamphlet of some 100 pages, being a compend of historical facts and matters of faith relating to all the known religions of the world, giving dates statistical and chronological accounts, instructive to the general reader. We think highly of it. Price 50 cents. Address the Author, A. B. Church, Columbus, Ind.

REVERIES OF A WOOD SAWYER.—A very neat, well printed volume of 230 pages. It is peculiar and original in style containing most excellent ideas tho' couched in the quaint illiterate language of "Jonas Simpkins" the wood sawyer. Price \$1.00. Address B. E. G. Jewett, Evansville Ind.





## THE MYSTERIES OF THE UNIVERSE.

Being an Exposition of the Relative Merits and Demerits of Materialism and Supernaturalism.

Continued from the Boston Investigator, where No.'s 1 to 6 can be obtained.

## CHAPTER VIII.

Which is rather more periphrastic than the "law" allows, in endeavoring to show that the preconceived notions of a Supreme Intelligence are prejudicial to a clear conception of the Mysteries of Nature.

It is a condition of paramount importance that the student of nature admits no extraneous influences to disturb the equanimity of his mind. He must not allow notions of a prognostical character to arrest his attention, as they would inevitably pervert and mislead his judgment. All ideas having the least taint of the supernatural about them must be debarred from entering "the holy precincts of his mind." If he is earnest in his endeavors to cover the entire area of existencies in his researches, he must not start out from the premises that he has already found what he strives or pretends to seek. He must not accept as the "fountain head" of nature a being of whom there is no tangible evidence, as to enquire into the nature or the origin of all existencies would most assuredly include that of this assumed being also. No predication must be accepted as an incontrovertible truth, until its validity is substantiated either through the mediation of our senses, evidences of reason, or experimental proof. A God is not within the reach of either of these, hence can not be regarded as anything but a mere postulate, forever precluded from entering the domain of reason, sense and tentative verification. To obdurately persist in presuming the existence of a Deity exposes the enquirer to the charge that he is not sincere in his allegation to weigh all propositions candidly. He would be loth to accept what coincides not with his prejudicated sentiments.

To conjecture and to study are mental operations entirely unlike in their nature and effect. To surmise is to entertain without demonstration, while to study is an exertion to confirm or eliminate through demonstration, as the case may be. The former is the popular, because easiest, modus operandi of the masses, while the latter is the course pursued by materialists, as well as by scientists in general. Results may be more tedious to arrive at by the latter mode, but it is the only legitimate way through which the Gordian knot of Nature can ever be enucleated.

To revel in the contemplation of—what can be best received with eyes closed—seriously embarrasses the disquisitor in his studies, and impedes his progress. He must not be hampered in his investigations by supernatural "hangers on." If he will persist in interposing all imaginable sorts of spirit-phantasmagoria between his judgment and the object of his deliberation, he must not expect to gain an insight in what has puzzled the most perspicacious and "wisest of the wise."

The moment that he predicates the subordination of the occult forces of matter to an overruling providence; as soon as he imagines that he discerns in the complex coaptation of conditions, evidences of an intelligent and omnific design, that moment ceases he to be an inquirer. He comes to a dead halt in his "researches." He seeks no further. He is incapacitated from continuing his labors. He has relinquished his task in dismay. He deceives himself with the belief that the ultima thule of existencies has been reached, when a moment's deliberation makes it patent that the source of his assumed God must be questioned. But the "mental effort" has been too much for him. "So far and not farther" could he go. He has become utterly incompetent to think and act. Why? Because a reaction has set in. The vitality of his mental organism rushes from "Causality" to "veneration and ideality." The organs of superstition are heated with the life's blood, while the organ of reason languishes. Its excess of vital force, which suffused it before the fatal conclusion had been arrived at, has departed for the "fields of imagination." It is "left out in the cold" for the time being. The brain ceases to think and reason, while busily engaged—imagining. It roams the "terra incognita" of a "spirit world." A thousand fantastic shapes dance through and skip the celestial panorama it evokes. He peoples the skies with numberless multiform "sprights." The nature of the *Greatest*, from whom the lesser ones emerged, he would, but dares not fathom, and why should he strive? having so signally failed from comprehending the least mysterious of all existencies, his assumed Maker.

## SUBORDINATE WORKS.

In installing a Deity to rule over nature, he commits the deplorable error of adding a mystery to what already exist, thereby attesting his utter in-

competency to reason on matters that pertain not to his physical welfare. He has exposed his impotency to cope with the problems before him. He augments difficulties; for now, instead of one he has two mysteries to solve: *Nature and God*. And when he has thus sagaciously succeeded in creating a greater enigma, wherewith to explicate a lesser one, he perfunctory refuses to grapple with the problems of either. Within the sphere of his "calibre" come for analysis no higher subjects than what are conducive to his physical necessities and comforts. Whatever his corporeal wants may suggest, whatever task his needs impose upon him and his bodily welfare demands, that he is ever ready, and willing, and able to "grasp." Most thoroughly can he "digest" all propositions that concern his daily routine of life.

To assume a being superior to nature explains nothing, except the source of this being can be accounted for. To attribute the origin of tangible realities of whose existence we are apprised by all our senses, to "a something" of which no reliable party has ever received the least evidence, is a parolgy, which no one but the most obtuse on such matters, can for a moment entertain. To accept such a sophism, deprives the student of nature of the only means, wherewith he might attain what he is in quest of. When he again ventures out on the sea of investigation, it is with the fatal impression that he has already found the truth. What is there to stimulate him to extraordinary exertions when he fears that he may find what clashes with his pet notions! His subsequent efforts must necessarily be devoid of the vivacity, which would animate him, if the gem of truth were yet to be found. He is beguiled by a glittering bawble which dazzles his eyes. *It shines!*—At the shrine of vanity he gratifies his sophomorical self-sufficiency. He cares not whether the offshoot of his vivid imagination (or that of his great grand forefathers) be of intrinsic worth, or a well-simulated counterfeit, devoid of all value whatsoever, he blindly accepts it as an unalloyed jewel. He realizes not in his infatuation that "All is not gold that glitters," being content if the "brass" don't "shine" through while he lasts.

He looks only in one direction, revelling in the imaginary rather than in the contemplation of the real. He treads "lightly" (and softly) on illusive "why's" and "wherefore's," to the exclusion and detriment of nature's manifold "hows." The nature of tangible realities he cannot discern through the thick fog of preternatural design his fancy evokes, unfitting him from perceiving that what seems "so wonderfully adapted and formed for each other" is an unavoidable result of vital and forever active matter, which through inconceivable ages adjusted itself into mutually conformable bodies. His abortive attempt to excogitate the mysterious forces or condition of matter, are prompted by no higher motive than to gratify the cravings of an idle curiosity, being impotent to conceive the most ordinary manifestation of nature. His inquiries are not the legitimate offspring of that devotional application which a sincere yearning for the conception of truth alone can inspire, but are instigated by a view to restrain others from enjoying the contents of the Thesaurus they strive to fill through constant assiduity. The highest ambition of a religious zealot is to derogate with scorn and belittle with ridicule any new accessions that might be made thereunto to deter the earnest seeker after truth from unfolding new mysteries to harass him in his pursuit after new gems, and if possible, induce him to relinquish what he has found. The assumer of a "Deity" is not actuated by a commendable impulse to promote the cause of truth, that he oppugns the doctrine of nature's independence, subordinate to no *supernal* power. He resists the general acceptance of this truism from no higher motive than that its contravention affords the myriads of hungry prelates a life of luxury and ease. Of this class as well as with the average God worshipper, I can well exclaim with him whom I conceive to be the greatest philanthropist and humanitarian that was ever born of woman and begat by man: "Verily, verily, I say unto ye, it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, than for such 'Seekers after Truth (?)' to enter the Kingdom of—*Nature*."

HERMAN WETTSTEIN.

Harvard, Ill., Nov. 24, 1873.

## THE GODS.

There are Gods of wood and Gods of stone,  
There are Gods of ivory and Gods of bone,  
There are Gods of iron and Gods of brass,  
There are Gods of porcelain and Gods of glass.  
Some Gods have fins, some Gods have scales,  
Some Gods have horns, some Gods have tails,  
Some Gods drink wine, some feed on grass,  
Some Gods ride clouds, some ride an ass.

T. B. JOHNSON, Sterling, Iowa.

Aged 72.

For The Truth Seeker.

## CONVERSATIONS.

Christian.—"I know how the world was made. The Bible tells me. I don't ask your scientific men."

Liberal.—Your Bible is full of mistakes and contradictions. It is absurd to appeal to it for proof of even creed or dogma; for being false in facts of ordinary character how can you trust its extraordinary statements?

C.—"It is not so! 'Tis true on every point, and is the Fountain of truth, and is often corroborated by profane history."

L.—"Why Friend you astonish me. Even so late as Christ's time of which we have history in abundance you can't even prove that such a person as Jesus Christ ever lived outside of the contradictory statements of the gospel."

C.—"Josephus, an enemy and a Jew proves that Christ lived. What are you talking about? contradictory gospels! Show me a contradiction."

L.—"But friend, wait a moment; Don't you know Josephus' statement is recognized by your great Dr. Lardner and others as a forgery?"

C.—"Yes! Like you Infidels! when cornered you cry 'lies, forgeries,' to get out. Josephus, aside from his Jewish prejudices, is the most truthful accurate and careful writer who ever used a pen and"

L.—"I admit that he is as you say, but refer you to your learned writers for the forgery charges. But now Josephus says Herod the King died 'five days after he killed his son Antipater,' and within a few days after he burned Matthias; and says, 'that very night there was an eclipse of the moon.' This eclipse has been calculated back a thousand times; it occurred March 13, 4 years Before Christ." See Antiquities Book 16 C. 6.

C.—"Ha! ha! ha! What of that? What has that to do with the subject? This talk is *lunacy*."

L.—"Wait friend! Does not Matthew say Christ was born in the days of Herod the King?"

C.—"Then he was, that's all. I take Matthew before Josephus."

L.—"Very good! I thought just now Josephus was so accurate. But if you take Matthew before Josephus, you still have the date of the moon's eclipse March 13th, 4 years Before Christ."

A learned friend steps up and whippers him "the vulgar era is just four years in error. In fixing the date of Christ's birth a mistake of just four years was made, and it is generally known among scholars that Christ's real birth was just four years before the year one of the Vulgar Era."

C.—"Precisely! Just so! These Infidels are always finding mare's nests."

L.—"I fear I shall have to laugh now and I shall laugh last. To reconcile Matthew 'Now—in the days of Herod the King' with Josephus, or rather with the Eclipse, you have moved back the date of Christ's birth four years, or the Priests have done it for you. Poor, daring, ignorant blunderers; they never knew what Luke says."

C.—"Luke! Luke! ! Good gracious now! what does he say?"

L.—"Why Luke says Christ was born when his Parents went to be taxed and 'this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.' Cyrenius was made governor of Syria after Archilaus, Herod's son was banished. Archilaus who is mentioned by Matthew as reigning in his father's stead, reigned ten years and was then banished by Cesar Augustus, who joined Judea on to Syria as a province, and sent Cyrenius who had been consul and a General as Josephus and others show, to be governor of Syria, and 'sell the house of Archilaus.' Josephus says that when he arrived he ordered an 'assessment and this taxing was taken heinously by the Jews at first.' So now, you see, to reconcile Matthew with Josephus you have made matters worse; for if you are correct, then, according to Luke, Christ was born at least over fourteen years after Herod's death. But according to Luke himself, 3d chapter, Christ began to be 30 years of age in the 15th year of Tiberius reign. As we know the very day of his accession, if we count back 25 years from 15th Tiberius we come exactly to the year one of the vulgar era. At any rate either Matthew or Luke are false in this most important point. Now my dear friends, were I to introduce to you any story of every day life, with such blunders, you as critics, would say my story, probable enough in itself, is unworthy of credit; because of my self-evident falsehoods. How then shall you ask me, and a thousand millions of men, Buddhists, Mohammedans, Jews, etc. to believe that most extraordinary and bold idea that the Creator of all the 'countless peopled universe' rolling in space, begat a son upon the body of a common Jewish woman a few generations ago; when you introduce the most wondrous story of all ages by blunders and discrepancies as extraordinary as the story itself?"

CHARLES IRVINE,

Oregon, Holt Co., Mo.

[For the Truth Seeker.]

## LYING FOR CHRIST'S SAKE.

Every religion has its peculiarities and absurdities, and the Christian is by no means an exception to the rule. One of the most prominent, and at the same time unaccountable peculiarities in the latter (if its divine origin be admitted) is that of a lack of unity of statement, or rather, a direct contradiction by some writers of the sacred (?) book of the teachings of others, and sometimes of themselves.

This we can readily understand and excuse, if the Bible is simply a record of the religious thought and experiences of men in different ages and conditions of development; but on the theory of its divine origin, it is simply inexplicable; and if understood at all, it will be by the "eye of faith," and not by the exercise of reason and common sense.

For illustration: Lying, or bearing false witness is deemed so great an evil by the Jewish law-giver as to be ranked among the *ten* special things in the Decalogue that we are prohibited from doing. By another sacred writer we are told that "lying lips are an abomination to the Lord;" and by still another that "all liars shall have their portion in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone;" and that "God is not a man that he should lie," etc. And yet in the face of all this, by other writers in the same book, and sometimes by the same authors, the very opposite of such statements are made, and lying is defended as right and expedient. As for instance, where St. Paul says: "But if our unrighteousness commend the righteousness of God, what shall we say?" "For if the truth of God hath more abounded through my *lie* unto his glory, why yet am I also judged as a sinner?" Or as stated in Ezekiel: "If the prophet be deceived when he hath spoken a thing, I the Lord have deceived that prophet." And again, in 1st Kings, it is said: "Now therefore the Lord hath put a lying spirit in the mouth of all thy prophets." Also in 2d Thessalonians: "For this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie, that they all might be damned." St. James commends Rahab for lying and deceiving her countrymen in the matter of the Jewish spies, and even in the Gospels, we find Christ himself inculcating the necessity of deceiving the common people: "That seeing they might see and not perceive, and hearing, they might hear, but not understand."

Nor did the early Christians, or their Catholic successors fail to profit by these latter teachings. Origen, one of the Christian fathers, and the prince of liars, defends the practice in his writings; and Mosheim, the highest authority in Church history, admits that in the fourth century "it was an almost universally adopted maxim that it was an act of virtue to *deceive* and *lie*, when by such means the interests of the church might be promoted." This doctrine of falsehood, has been by the Roman Catholic Church formulated into the Jesuitical maxim "that the end justifies the means."

The result of these Christian teachings on early literature has been of the most pernicious character, for the works and manuscripts of the early pagan writers, from which alone we might have learned the truth concerning the Christian religion have been, when allowed to exist at all, so falsified by interpolation and expurgation as to render it almost impossible to separate the true from the false.

Nor did this passion for lying cease at the Reformation; for none have wielded that ignoble weapon in controversy more effectively than have the Protestants—witness the cloud of lies and false accusations that to-day in Protestant countries rest on the memory of such eminent opponents of Christianity as Voltaire, Paine, Hume and Jefferson. It is true that the hatred of these representative men, is not quite so intense as it was fifty years ago; nevertheless it will be long before the theological odium heaped upon their characters shall be erased from the public mind.

But it is curious to observe how illogical Christians are in matters appertaining to their religion; they seem to lose their senses the moment they pass from the consideration of "worldly" to "spiritual things." For instance, they are in the habit of accusing Thomas Paine (falsely of course) of immorality, and arguing therefore, that his arguments against the Christian religion are not worthy of notice, and can have no force or effect, by reason of his alleged immoral life.

Now if this "ruling" is to obtain, that the immoral character of a writer invalidates the truth which he utters, and renders worthless his arguments or teachings, why then, it follows as a logical sequence, that those books of the Bible, whose writers, by the record were not only *notoriously immoral* but *criminal* should never have been allowed place in the sacred (?) canon!

Mark the result of the application of this "ruling" to the Christian Scriptures.

Moses, the reputed author of the Pentateuch, was, as is well known, not only a *murderer*, and an instigator to wholesale robbery and pillage, but also a most blood-thirsty and cruel man, as may be inferred from his commands (see Exodus 32d ch., 27 and 28 verses; also 1st Samuel, 15 ch., 3d verse; also, Numbers, 31st chap., 17th and 18th verses. The Pentateuch, then, by this "ruling" should never have been allowed a place in the Scriptures!

The Psalms of David, certainly should have been excluded, as the record shows him to have been, not only a murderer and an adulterer, but to have been possessed of a very revengeful and implacable disposition.

Solomon was pre-eminently the prince of free-lovers, in the popular and bad sense of that term, which of course would rule out the book of Proverbs, and especially that licentious song that bears his name. And if we should so interpret the rule as to exclude matter *not fit for a child or pure-minded person to read*, no matter whether its author was known to be immoral or not, it would reduce the sacred book to a *very small volume*; and who can doubt that the world would have been the better for it?

HUGH B. BROWN,  
New York, Nov. 18, 1873.

For The Truth Seeker.

## "COMMON CAUSE."

MESSRS. PUBLISHERS:—Under the above heading, an article appears in the Oct. Number of the "Truth Seeker, wherein the writer, Herman Wettstein, belabors you and other Infidel papers, somewhat, for making "Common Cause" with Spiritualism. I was sorry to see this, at so early an age of your paper. He suggests that you "paddle your own canoe" alone. Cut off the support of Spiritualists, and I fear your paper would never reach a "weekly" issue. I believe that three-fourths of your subscribers to-day are Spiritualists. I do not know of an infidel that takes your paper, yet I have earnestly solicited them to subscribe for it.

Infidels and Spiritualists have heretofore labored harmoniously together, in combatting ignorance, superstition and the various dogmas of the day.—One of the most harmonious and intelligent gatherings I ever attended, was at a celebration in the city of Waverly, on Tom Paine's last anniversary day. Yet the orator for the occasion was Asa Warren, one of the finest inspirational speakers from the Spiritualist ranks that I have ever listened to. No, no, Brother Wettstein. Work together. The 4th plank in the platform of the Truth Seeker, is the strongest plank therein, financially at least. There are perhaps fifty spiritualists in the field, combatting orthodox dogmas to-day, where there is one infidel.

Yours truly,

D. P. WALLING

Tripoli, Iowa, Nov. 19, 1873.

## FROM A. B. CHURCH.

COLUMBUS, INDIANA, }  
Nov. 10, 1873. }

Mr. "Truth Seeker."

I have received two copies of your paper. I endorse the sentiments. Am familiar with what you offer—so are thousands; yet, narrow contracted minds continue to assert their doctrines are correct beyond question, and such will continue until the teachings of bigots are superceded by the common sense, and sound reason of cultivated minds—minds not afraid to think or speak their convictions, no matter what any one may say; hence, there is need for more "Truth Seekers" all over the land to convince people it is more to their welfare, or interest to cultivate their minds and reasoning powers than to rely on any ones, teachings, especially the withering doctrines of sectarianism.

So long as so many prefer to pay their dimes and dollars for cigars, tobacco, whisky, nigger shows, and otherwise, so long will general happiness in the land be delayed and all for want of solid instruction generally, to benefit humanity in all time to come.

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